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**What Ever Happened
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Has The U.S. Press Abandoned Israel?



FEBRUARY 1975

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LETTERS

Adversaries

Your contributor Irving Kristol [Furthermore—January 1975] was one of those "addled intellectuals," in Arthur Schlesinger's phrase, who, in October 1972, signed a full-page ad in the Sunday *New York Times* urging Americans to vote for Richard Nixon as "a prudent and responsible leader." Kristol is also the man who, as editor of *Encounter* in London, said later that he did not know the magazine was being financed by the CIA. Apparently Irving has no fiscal curiosity.

Kristol wrote a couple of obscurantist articles for *The Wall Street Journal* about Watergate, although he did not explain or apologize for his endorsement of Nixon. It would be much more valuable than an abstract issue like adversary journalism if [MORE] could persuade Kristol to come clean at last.

—Louis Messolonghites
New York, N.Y.

from the adversary relationship.

Mr. Kristol owes it to your readers to separate fact from opinion. He concludes that, despite the First Amendment, no free press can long survive in such an atmosphere of distrust and hostility. Let him study the history of journalism in this country and learn that open covenants openly arrived at have been successful in helping to preserve the free society. The public relations firm I founded 55 years ago has, as a public service over the last 22 years, made periodic surveys of the publishers of U.S. dailies to isolate the 10 that most nearly approach the three ideals of American journalism—independence, fighting for the public good and presenting objective news. The interest these surveys have aroused among publishers and public alike prove that these ideals continue to be the goals of American journalism.

Edward L. Bernays
Cambridge, Mass.

'Petty Tyrant'

It's true that Deanne Stillman finally gets around to mentioning Bob Grant's "artless and sometimes vicious variations of the street corner insult" ["Take That, You Lonely People"—January 1975]. For the rest, one gets the impression, or at least I did, of a more or less lovable old bastard who just happens to have a bad temper that his adoring audience allows as only adding to his charm. Well, that's not the way I see it, and I've been listening on and off for several years now. The man is an obscenity—crude, vulgar, vicious, brutal, a bully and petty tyrant, riding the airways, courtesy of Peter Straus's liberal WMCA all-day talk radio.

Providing approval and a form of respectability for nearly all varieties of prejudice, racism, chauvinism and other irrational hatreds, Grant pours forth his daily dose of venom upon blacks and the Spanish accented, in fact on anyone with accent or speech oddity. In a good mood, Grant merely indulges in searing ridicule. But the Bob Grant show raises more fundamental questions.

For one, there is the disturbing fact of his popularity with middle-class Jewish groups that in my opinion transcends Grant's advocacy of Israel and Jewish pleasure in having a non-Jew as ardent Israeli supporter. In the context of the two-way exchange day after day, it is quite clear that it is fear of blacks (with the teachers' strike a few years ago, the Forest Hills episode and, of course, street crime, as bases) that endears Grant to this grouping more than the Israeli cause.

By being allowed to spew his crudities and vulgarities over the air, Grant sets a tone and mood which elicits from his audience the worst of their own feelings of hatred and racism and encourages a response in kind.

Grant arouses the worst in his audience, and it is frightening to listen day after day and discover just how much of the "worst" is out there susceptible to being aroused. One wonders many things, and the fear that follows is more threatening than crime in the streets.

—Marc Stone
New York, N.Y.

The interests of truth, accuracy and fair play demand comment on "Is the Press Misusing Its Growing Power?" [Furthermore] by Irving Kristol in your January 1975 issue.

Many unproven assumptions, glittering generalities, unauthenticated statements call for this, lest some readers, influenced by the prestigious connections of the author, accept what he writes as authoritative. I for one do not recognize his name as an expert commentator on U.S. journalism.

Mr. Kristol presents personal opinions as if proven fact. To make such broad statements about the 1,774 daily newspapers in this country requires painstaking appraisal and arduous research. This is not evidenced by the article.

As instances, I know of no survey that validates his flat statement that today most of our younger journalists accept as a platitude the notion that the media should assume an adversary position vis-à-vis the government.

What proof for his broad assumption that during the 19th century the press was as "likely to criticize government for doing too little as for doing too much"?

What proof that the most "respectable" and influential part of the press in the 19th century regarded itself as the "fourth branch of government"?

What validation is there for the statement that "journalists do not see government as having any right at all to have its point of view fully and fairly presented to the public"? I know many who hold the opposite point of view. For instance, they deplore the broad coverage of former President Nixon's mouthings.

What validation for the all-embracing statement that public officials find it impossible to get the activities of their agencies or offices fairly and adequately reported in the press? What poppycock.

Or his statement that "journalists today are overwhelmingly in favor of greater concentration of power in government," or that the sad truth is that everyone but journalists is beginning to suffer from cramps

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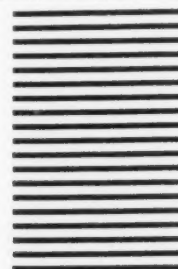
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Continuing Sagas

Despite Columbia Picture's unwillingness to release *Hearts and Minds* ("The Battle Over 'Hearts and Minds'"—December, 1974), the controversial Vietnam war documentary opened a one-week run in late December in Westwood, Cal., to qualify for the Academy Awards. Columbia had earlier sold the film to an independent production company called Rainbow Pictures for more than \$1 million. Warner Bros. agreed to distribute the film, and planned a general release by early February. But the film ran into yet another snag.

Vietnam policymaker Walt Rostow, who objected to the use of his interview in the film, was denied



a temporary restraining order because the film's one-week engagement was deemed unlikely to damage Rostow's reputation irreparably. But when the film proved successful at the box office, Rainbow decided to extend its run. At that point, Superior Court Judge Campbell M. Lucas ordered the defendants either to delete one of the questionable passages (when asked why we were in Vietnam, Rostow says, "Are you really asking me this god damn silly question?"), or to refrain from showing the film until a Jan. 17 hearing to consider Rostow's request for a permanent injunction. Producers Bert Schneider and Peter Davis refused to alter the film and withdrew it from the Westwood theater. They planned to appeal the ruling before Jan. 17.

Family Affair

Wilmington, Del., is known as a Du Pont Company town, but you wouldn't necessarily have been aware of it from the two Wilmington *News-Journal* newspapers, which are controlled by E. I. Du Pont de Nemours & Co.

DU PONTERS PACED NIXON FUND DRIVE, cried a page-one headline in late 1973, mentioning that among other contributors the board chairman of the *News-Journal* newspapers, David Dawson, secretly donated \$3,000 to Nixon the day before the reporting deadline for

political contributions.

COMPARISON'S MADE FOR FIVE DU PONT LANDS, headlined another story that year, documenting the special treatment the Du Pont Company gets from the Delaware tax assessor.

Those stories and others infuriated board chairman Dawson, formerly a senior vice-president of Du Pont and still a board member of the parent company. "No more resources will be made available for reflective or investigative reporting," Dawson ordered in a memo to executive editor John G. Craig, early in 1974. But in December, a series investigating the once top-secret finances of the University of Delaware—a Du Pont family-backed institution—tipped the scale.

Dawson's opportunity to clean house finally came in December after executive editor Craig recommended a series of executive promotions. In an emergency meeting of the board on Dec. 30, Dawson won approval not only to block the promotions but to demand the resignations of metro editor John Baker and assistant metro editor Robert Hodieme. Both Craig and associate editor Curtis Wilkie announced they would resign. Several of the brightest young staff members said they too would leave.

Delaware's Gov. Sherman W. Tribitt, long a target of the *News-Journal* reporting staff, unexpectedly weighed in with his disapproval. "I am gravely concerned that this could hamper the continued development of a free and independent press in Delaware," he said, and called for community leaders to get together and discuss it. —PETER ARNETT



Back to the Ol' Cliff's Notes

Whatever became of *Classics Illustrated*, those gaudy comic book versions of literary masterpieces which got many a high school student of the 40s, 50s and 60s through many a book report? Twin Circle, an ultra-conservative Catholic publishing company, stopped printing and distributing the 169 *Classics* titles in 1972. Since then, the company has been deluged with calls from teachers, students and collectors who want the remaining 250,000 copies.

Twin Circle, which bought *Classics* from its originator, Gilberton Publishing, in 1969, attributed the production halt to distribution problems and the cost of color printing. Bill Kanter, son of Gilberton's late founder, recalls that the 60s were *Classics*' peak years, with annual circulation at 25 million.



But by that time, Gilberton had begun to falter. George Evans, the illustrator for "Terry and the Pirates," used to work for Gilberton and thinks the company did itself in by attempting to diversify. Evans remembers an abortive effort to bring out a Perry Mason comic and an unsuccessful magazine which was meant to replace *Coronet*.

Since many teachers regarded *Classics Illustrated* as a prostitution of literature, the company went to great lengths to placate them, and the result, Evans says, was sometimes endless production delays and stiff, awkward art. "A month after I submitted the original art on one project, they were still counting buttons on uniforms and complaining that I hadn't shown the right number," Evans says. "I had to take photographs to prove that if a character was leaning over, you couldn't see all his buttons."

But the market for instant literature is still there. *Classics Collectors Club Newsletter* already has 300 subscribers. And Ed Summer, owner of Supersnipe, a Manhattan comics shop, says the 169 *Classics* titles sell from 75 cents to \$25, depending on their number, edition and condition. The hardest to find—#43 (*Great Expectations*) and the first editions of #1 (*The Three Musketeers*) are going for \$50. Meanwhile, Pendulum Press, a Connecticut educational publisher, has put its own line of 24 classics comics, *Now Age Illustrated*, whose

Star of Stage, Screen And . . .

No unemployment lines for Ronald Reagan. Between meetings of the President's commission on the CIA, the former governor will busy himself with a syndicated radio program and a newspaper column. Last fall he signed a two-year contract with O'Connor Creative Services in Los Angeles for a five times weekly, five-minute radio commentary called "Viewpoint." The show sold to over 160 stations within a few weeks.

Several newspaper chains also approached Reagan, but he signed with the Copley News Service, which also syndicates conservative columnists Jeffrey St. John and Ralph de Toledano. The national shortage of conservative commentators appears to augur well for the Reagan column's success. As for whether he can write, Copley editor John Pinkerman says, "He can sure talk. If you can talk, you can write."



Radio's Ronald Reagan

HELLBOX

paperback format is in sober—and cheaper—black and white. Publisher Anthony Sherman describes the series as “wildly successful,” especially with teachers who are “desperate for something students will read.”

—ANN MARIE CUNNINGHAM

Oily Response

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, representing 60,000 refinery and pipeline workers, was negotiating a new three-year contract with the seven major oil companies. Concerned about becoming a scapegoat in the event of an economy-damaging strike, the union took the unprecedented step of publicizing its negotiating position with a nationwide promotion campaign. A full-page ad, headlined **THEY CAN'T ROB US BLIND IF WE OPEN OUR EYES**, ran in 15 newspapers on Dec. 16, including *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*.

(The Oil Companies and Inflation)

They can't rob us blind if we open our eyes.

We, the refinery workers of America, are about to take an unprecedented step in the relationship between worker and employer. We're going to open up one of the most secretive industries in America to public scrutiny. We're going to tell you why oil prices are so high.

How the oil industry causes the inflation that robs our paychecks. And... what we can do about it.



The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. We want a fair shake. For us, for you, for America.

Union ad rejected by Newsweek

The ad also ran in *Business Week*. It was scheduled for the Dec. 30 issue of *Newsweek*, but was rejected at the last minute without explanation.

The ad pointed out that despite industry profits of 360 per cent since 1961 and executive raises of more than 21 per cent last year, workers' wages have declined in spending power. “In 1966 our average wage was \$3.45 an hour,” the copy reads. “Today we get \$3.27 an hour in 1966 dollars.”

The Public Media Center in San Francisco, which is handling the campaign, submitted the ad to *Newsweek* the first week in December. Two weeks later, word came down from Dick Bausch that the ad had been refused “because it does not meet our advertising acceptability standards.” CMC's Frank Greer asked what those standards were, but was told they were not available. He was also told that the decision to kill had been

made by *Newsweek's* publisher, Robert E. Campbell.

Greer tried to contact Campbell several times without success. He also called Katharine Graham, chairman of the board of the Washington Post Company, which owns *Newsweek*. Graham's assistant promised that Campbell would contact Greer, and even called back the next day to make certain Campbell had called. He hadn't. Nor did he return [MORE]'s calls. But one *Newsweek* advertising executive explained the company's policy. “*Newsweek* reserves the right to reject ads that do not meet acceptability standards,” he said. “That is exactly where we stand.” Spokesman Richard Lynch denied that Campbell was responsible for killing the ad and insisted that an advertising representative had been trying to reach Greer to explain the decision. Greer said this was not true.

Newsweek, of course, usually finds room each week to run four to 12 “acceptable” oil company ads. “The astounding thing is that for a year and a half we have been bombarded with ads promoting the industry, and now the other side can't get a chance to respond,” says Greer. “*Newsweek* seems to be interested only in selling products and promoting the corporate state.”

At other publications, only the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* requested that one line which read “. . . the oil industry spent huge sums on illegal campaign contributions in 1972. . .” be changed to “. . . some segments of the oil industry spent. . .” Even the *Houston Post*, which circulates on the oil industry's turf, ran the ad without question.

—AMANDA HARRIS

Mm-Mm Bad

Vegetable soup fans, take note. On Dec. 21, *The Herald-News* of Passaic, N.J., reported that Campbell's Soup Co. charges several cents more for 10½ ounces of old-fashioned vegetable soup than it does for 10¾ ounces of regular vegetable soup. The story, which ran on page one, also noted that local supermarkets place the better buy—the regular soup—on the lower shelves.

Two days later, executive editor Coit Hendley Jr. sent a memorandum to managing editor Richard Paduch objecting to the story's placement and treatment. The memo continued:

This type of consumer reporting is difficult at best. I don't see the logic in attacking two cans of soup. Any reasonably smart housewife is aware of the price difference and makes her choice. The story hints of dirty work but has there been dirty work?



Paul Richer

In any case, no stories attacking a product or an advertiser are to be placed in *The Herald-News* without my personal okay. . . I am interested in consumer reporting but done in a proper fashion.

Paduch, who had approved the story prior to publication, now says he is “perturbed in retrospect” over it. He declined to discuss his reservations, however, because “your name isn't on that memo, lady.” Although supermarkets are heavy advertisers in the *Herald-News*, Paduch says he knows of no complaints received from them following the story. The newspaper does “a pretty good job” of consumer reporting, Paduch says, but as for possible conflicts if advertiser reaction must now be considered, Paduch says, “I don't see where that's relevant.”

A New Plumber At the CIA?

When the House Armed Services Intelligence Subcommittee reconsiders the 1947 CIA charter this session, on the docket will be a proposal by CIA director William Colby designed to halt leaks to the press. Colby's proposal would impose a \$10,000 fine and/or ten years in prison on anyone who, “in duly authorized possession or control of information relating to intelligence sources and methods,” purposely “communicates such information” to an unauthorized individual.

Most important, the proposal would establish preventive censorship as a fact of government life. Colby, as CIA director, would have virtual authority to determine what is a state secret. Under the legislation, the agency chief could “request” that the Attorney General impose an injunction on anyone who, in the opinion of the CIA director, “has engaged or is about to engage

in any acts which constitute a violation” of the sanctions.

Although journalists would “not (be) subject to prosecution as an accomplice,” the media could seemingly be restrained by injunctions. Those who serve in government and later write about intelligence matters would not be granted immunity.

Passage of Colby's proposal, also before the Office of Management and Budget, seems unlikely in its present form. But of course some compromise language is always a possibility.

The recent CIA revelations have probably increased opposition to the proposal, but Colby will surely find a few friends on this particular subcommittee. One committee member is Bob Wilson (R-Calif.), who declared during last summer's hearings that he would be “willing to forego even the basic Constitutional rights. . . in some instances” if he could find out a secret or two from the Russians.

—JAMES GOODMAN

Enemy Lines

The word “Vietcong” will no longer infiltrate the Vietnam coverage of the *Boston Globe*. “It is a misnomer, a propaganda word,” says Charles Whipple, editorial page editor. “It has no place in our news columns.” The *Globe* will also refrain from designating the North Vietnamese and Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam as the “enemy.”

This change was prompted by a conflict between Danny Schechter, news director of Boston's WBCN radio and a free-lancer for the *Globe*, and Matthew Storin, the *Globe's* Asian correspondent. Schechter traveled to North and South Vietnam in October and November with a financial advance and letter of introduction from the *Globe*. While in North Vietnam, he was interviewed by Radio Hanoi, which at Schechter's request agreed not to mention his name. Schechter says he asked for anonymity to avoid being expelled from or arrested in Saigon.

In Saigon, John Hogan, the U.S. Embassy's press counselor, confronted Schechter with a transcript of the Radio Hanoi broadcast. Schechter says Hogan told him: “Is this you? Schechter, were you in North Vietnam? Jesus, did you broadcast on Radio Hanoi?” Hogan said the interview had been picked up by the State Department from a Radio Havana broadcast which identified Schechter by name.

In December, Matthew Storin arrived in Saigon. On Dec. 17 an op-ed piece appeared under his by-line

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in the *Globe*, attacking Schechter for his Radio Hanoi interview. Storin condemned the notion that North Vietnam is "merciful, democratic and independent" and stated that "many of the communists are indiscriminate killers." Schechter, he wrote, was an apologist for a regime that had committed massacres in Hue in 1968 and at Cay Lai in 1973. The next day's *Globe* carried an article by Storin from Cay Lai repeating the story that "Vietcong" fire had killed helpless schoolchildren.

But in a letter and subsequent telephone calls to *Globe* editors, Schechter pointed out several facts which Storin had neglected to report. For the Cay Lai story, Storin had only interviewed the school principal, who had earlier blocked an investigation of the incident by the International Control Commission. In the case of the Hue massacre, Storin had repeated the government version without considering the counterclaims of prominent critics. Magnum photographer Phillip Jones-Griffith, who was in Hue in 1968, stated that the victims "were killed by the most hysterical use of American firepower ever seen."

The *Globe* responded with its language change and by sending Storin a letter asking what his sources were for the attack on Schechter. If the source was the American Embassy, Charles Whipple says, "We would take that very seriously." After several weeks, Storin had not yet replied. But on Dec. 20 the *Globe* ran another op-ed piece by Storin. It was a defense of continuing U.S. funding of the Thieu regime. —SID BLUMENTHAL

A Knight To Remember

An editorial in the Dec. 28 *Miami Herald*, headlined NO NAMES, PLEASE, praised St. Lucie County's decision "not to name any public facility for any living person." The editorial continued:

It is a rule much needed in Dade County and its cities [which include Miami]. Consider the excessively-sung non-heroes, not yet dead, whose names would fast fade from public memory had they not been attached to certain parks, highways and buildings which were financed entirely by the taxpayers.

Farther down on the same page, an item began:

A little sharper competition among contractors is evident in bidding on the James L. Knight conference center at the University of Miami. . . .

James L. Knight, alive and kicking, is chairman of the Knight newspapers and *The Miami Herald*.

How They Do It Down on the Farm

ROSEBUDS to the Washington staff of the *Des Moines Register* for its extensive and enterprising coverage of the U.S. agriculture story over the past two years. The *Register's* reporting has directly resulted in enactment of one major piece of reform legislation. And it has left the rest of the media embarrassingly far behind on a story whose importance, both domestically and worldwide, they seem only now beginning to grasp.

Much of the credit goes to investigative reporters George Anthan, 38, and James Risser, 36, who wrote most of the stories under the direction of bureau chief Clark Mollenhoff. The redoubtable Mollenhoff, who has long been one of Washington's most aggressive and hard-digging reporters, considers Anthan and Risser among the best, if least recognized, investigative journalists in town.

The centerpiece of the *Register's* coverage is a series conceived by Mollenhoff and begun in 1973, on the hopelessly lax regulation of the nation's commodities' exchanges by a supine and tiny agency of the Agriculture Department called the Commodities

dependent five-member regulatory agency called the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, to begin in April of this year. President Ford signed the bill over the protest of the Office of Management and Budget. The new agency will much more closely approximate the Securities and Exchange Commission's tight watch on stock dealing in its regulation of commodity trading.

The *Register* devoted extensive, alert coverage to the Soviet wheat deal and scored one important exclusive. It reported that the White House had put heavy pressure on the Department of Agriculture to complete the grain deal prior to the 1972 election. The result was that the Soviets got the grain at a depressed and government-subsidized price far below what they would have had to pay later when prices rose, or if there had been general knowledge of the Russian demand for the wheat. Thus not only did the Russians make off with a huge quantity of wheat which forced higher prices at home, but they got it at a bargain subsidized by the U.S. public—all apparently for the political convenience of Richard Nixon.

The *Register* has also stayed on top of a host of other aspects of the agricultural story. Last September, for example, Risser wrote a succinct and lucid two-part series on the world food shortage prior to the Rome food conference. The stories highlighted the backstage wrangling over U.S. policy and cut through the mad-hatter vacillations of Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz to demonstrate his priority consideration—keeping the vast U.S. grain resource in private, corporate hands, not in the control of any international or governmentally supervised reserve aimed at meeting worldwide needs, as had been proposed by some.

Another example of the *Register's* alertness is a long story published last October on a \$32.7 million antitrust judgment awarded against A&P by a San Francisco jury which found that the vast food chain had conspired to fix meat prices. The award had gotten only brief mention in the San Francisco press and almost no mention elsewhere. But it was enormously significant, particularly in view of the fact that the two other original defendants, Kroger and Safeway, had elected to settle out of court. Anthan and Risser spent several weeks studying the voluminous record of the case and reported in detail such evidentiary disclosures as the fact that food chain officials had been getting together wearing anonymous, color-coded identification tags for meetings during trade association gatherings to discuss meat prices. They also reported that the jury had been shown a picture of an A&P official meeting with a competitor—a meeting the food chain had claimed never occurred. The importance of the verdict is underscored by the ironic situation which existed at the time of the trial, and which exists today—the U.S. livestock industry is plagued by declining prices at the same time the consumer is paying record prices. The middlemen, including the grocery chains, are reporting rising profits.

Not surprisingly, the *Register* was on top of the story when the staff of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress completed a study in December which charged that the food chains had been putting out "misleading" financial statements to "cover up" recent high profits. Such a coverup is not nearly as sexy as Watergate, of course. But its significance, like that of the food story in general, has far greater ramifications.

—BRIT HUME



The *Register's* George Anthan (left) and James Risser

Exchange Authority. The *Register* revealed that:

- Although the General Accounting Office had reported in 1965 that the CEA's regulatory hand was "not sufficient to disclose and discourage abusive trading practices" in the commodities business, virtually nothing had been done to implement the GAO's recommended changes. This despite the fact that the volume of trading in the various commodity exchanges had tripled since 1965. CEA administrator Alex Caldwell told the *Register*, "I'm all for self-policing."
- An Agriculture Department computer program to assist in spotting deceptive or manipulative practices in commodity trading was abandoned by the CEA because it turned up so many suspicious transactions that the CEA staff was overwhelmed. Although CEA administrator Caldwell had cut his staff to make budgetary room for the computer program, he dropped it as "unworkable" and "unnecessary." "I'm no empire-builder," he told the *Register*.
- The CEA found no evidence of improper activity in a case where a maverick member of the Chicago Board of Trade was done out of both his seat on the Chicago market and thousands of dollars. The man, Bernard Rosee, had been howling to Congress for years about deceptive practices by big traders in manipulating commodities. While the CEA found nothing untoward, an Illinois judge awarded him \$700,000 and declared that he had been done in by "thoroughly dishonest" opponents.

The *Register's* series touched off five separate Congressional investigations, and Congress last year passed overwhelmingly a bill creating a new, in-

Has The Press Abandoned Israel?

BY SOL STERN

Stephen Isaacs reports in *Jews in American Politics* that Jews own only 3.1 per cent of the 1,700-plus newspapers in the U.S. Of course, the crucial fact of Jewish ownership, as every media insider and politician knows, is that it is concentrated where it is supposed to count. At *The New York Times*, for example. Or *The Washington Post* and *Newsweek*. Or at the three television networks. Much less generally perceived is the fact that these institutions regard their "Jewishness" as something of an embarrassment, a nervous condition that often moves them to cover certain news gingerly. As Gay Talese put it in *The Kingdom and the Power*:

The New York Times does not wish to be thought of as a "Jewish newspaper" which indeed it is not, and it will bend over backwards to prove this point, forcing itself at times into unnatural positions, contorted by compromise, balancing both sides, careful not to offend, wishing to be accepted and respected for what it is—a good citizens' newspaper, law abiding and loyal, solidly in support of the best interests of the nation in peace and war.

In most of the last decade, the *Times* and the rest of the U.S. press supported Israel in "the best interests of the nation in peace and war." But the choice was never a very tough one. Since the Yom Kippur war of 1973 and the Arab oil boycott that followed, however, hard domestic counterpressures have built up against the pro-Israel position. Now the crunch is on, and the Jewish sensitivity Talese so well describes is being severely tested—as it was 25 years ago when an embattled and unpopular Zionist movement had to fight for the birth of Israel without the support of the U.S. press.

Which brings us for a moment to Gen. George S. Brown and his now notorious observation that there is a pervasive "Jewish influence in the country." As he put it last November: "They own the banks, the newspapers. Just look at where the money is." The tendency of the press was to criticize the remarks as examples of old-fashioned anti-Semitism. And almost no one opposed the political thrust of the general's speech, which was his complaint about the amount of military equipment flowing from the Pentagon to Israel. Now it seems to me that when the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff attempts to undermine political support for Israel by publicly jawboning the media on ethnic grounds, it ought to be recorded as a significant event, especially when the press itself seems half willing to concede the general's case.

At least some part of Brown's political message got through on prime time TV. Eric Sevareid commented on CBS that Brown "was only half wrong" (the part about the banks and ownership of all the newspapers), but "even the half that was right can't be said in this country without the roof falling in on the sayer." Nevertheless, said Sevareid, in apparent praise of Brown's initiative, "It would be not only cowardly but dangerous to remain silent when the policies [of Israel] appear dubious."

The roof never did fall in on Sevareid. Nor did it fall in on Nicholas von Hoffman at *The Washington Post*. Though attacking Brown for anti-Semitism, von Hoffman agreed with the general that we have "paid too dearly for alienating the Arab world these past 25 years." He also suddenly discovered that the "American national interest" required a reconsideration of our support for Israel, a country that was always invading Lebanon and "turning itself into a kind of new

Sol Stern reported from Israel for The New Statesman, The New York Times and Ramparts from 1972 to 1974. He is now a free-lance writer in New York.

Jews don't control the media, as General Brown charged. But they are acutely sensitive about their influence, which, argues the author, is hardly as pro-Israel as the conventional wisdom assumes.

theocratic Sparta."

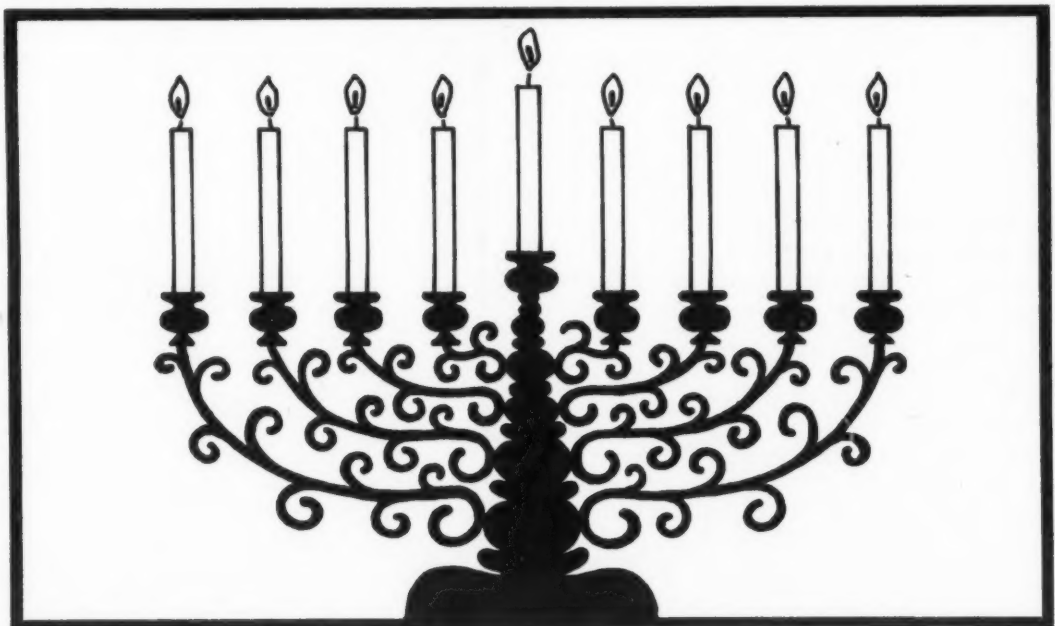
Brown's attack and the reaction of Sevareid and von Hoffman seem to me symptomatic of a new mood. It is one that political reporter Richard Reeves found at the midterm convention of the Democratic party in Kansas City. Reeves had attended an international issues seminar that included as panelists some of the leading lights of the party's liberal wing. The panelists tried to steer away from the Middle East conflict, but the fireworks came from the audience. One participant after another stood up to attack

Jewish influence in the press if it cannot or will not rise to the defense when its supposed most vital interests are under assault?

Not very, I think. Indeed, in the present emotional mood the very notion of Jewish media power, however ephemeral, leaves the press open to exploitation by appeals to the "national interest" as against the parochial "Jewish interest" in Israel. And this is only reinforced when journalists themselves seem blithely willing to plead the press guilty of being unfairly pro-Israel—which is exactly what happened at [MORE]'s third A.J. Liebling Counter Convention last May in New York.

"Is There a Jewish Bias in Coverage of The Middle East?" was the loaded question set before seven panelists, of whom only two were willing to absolve the press. But the two were not American journalists. One was the Israeli writer Amos Elon and the other was a rabbi, Arthur Hertzberg. All the journalists were on the other side, and the message they sent out was that the profession had judged itself unfair to the Arabs.

One of the journalists was Rick Smith, a *Newsweek* general editor, who voted "definitely yes" when addressing the question of whether there was a "Jewish bias" in the press. Yet only three months earlier, *Newsweek* served up a cover story (Feb. 18, 1974) that was an almost total celebration of the Arabs. Vivian Gornick, a journalist who had



Israel and the "pro-Israel" press. According to Reeves, writing in the Dec. 23 issue of *New York* magazine, one heavy contributor to George McGovern's presidential campaign said the American press—she singled out *Time* magazine—"was censored by Jewish bankers, editors and reporters." Another delegate "attacked 'Jewish terrorists' and said the problem of Israel had nothing to do with Jews, but the fact that Arabs objected to the settlement of 'foreigners' from Poland and Russia."

While Israel was thus being savaged, only one panel member meekly volunteered to respond. And the only Jew on the panel, ex-Ambassador Sol Linowitz, avoided the confrontation by saying the issues could not be dealt with in emotional arguments but only on the basis of "the highest national interest of the United States." All of which caused Reeves to wonder out loud why Jews, with all their supposed political power and influence, were no longer on the offensive.

A good question. And one that also grows out of the General Brown affair, with its lack of any strong press counterattack to the political campaign for a reevaluation of U.S. Middle East policy. In short: exactly how powerful and pervasive is the

lived in Egypt, complained that the press "never communicated the reality of the Egyptians." Probably there is some truth there. But Gornick had not been made victim of any institutional bias. For she had written quite warmly of the Egyptians, and her pieces were published in *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice*. And her book on the subject, *In Search of Ali Mahmoud*, was acclaimed on the front page of the *Times Book Review* and was nominated for a National Book Award.

One of the strongest indictments of the press was made by Paul Jacobs, who had just returned from a trip to Israel and to the Palestinian terrorists in Beirut. He had been on assignment from *The Washington Post*, which published two of his pieces on successive days. The Israel piece was sharp and critical. It pictured a society close to chaos, a discredited government, immigrants complaining of unemployment, and evoked "the plight of the darker-skinned Jews who suffer the most from unemployment, lack of education, housing shortages and inflation." It concluded: "... the only people in Israel who seem happy are the tourists. . . who remain blithely unaware of how much damage has been done to the spirit of those who live there."

The piece on the Palestinians was an upbeat description of the increasingly progressive attitudes toward Israel of the Palestine Liberation Organization leadership. Jacobs described Naif Hawatmeh, one of the top leaders, as the most enlightened of the Palestinians. Hawatmeh wanted to engage the Israelis in "direct dialogue," wrote Jacobs, and this shift was so profound that Hawatmeh's position was "one that many Israelis might support." Shortly after the piece was published, Hawatmeh's PLO faction carried out the massacre of the children at Maalot, and Hawatmeh personally trumpeted this victory. One cannot avoid the conclusion that in Israel, Jacobs was a muckraker; among the Palestinians, he was a house reporter.

Yet on the panel at Liebling III, Jacobs charged that the press shared a "general western bias concerning the Arab world" and that Israel is treated favorably in the press because it is "a cold war ally of America." He never mentioned his articles in the *Post*, nor the fact that the paper is home base for pro-Arab columnists Evans and Novak. (Columnist William Raspberry had also written several pieces attacking Israeli "intransigence"; von Hoffman's column would come later.) Yet panelist Jacobs found only that "there is some [Jewish] pressure upon editors" and there is "very often a self-censorship on the part of editors."

Undoubtedly the American press once did have a romance with Israel, and the memory lingers on in some circles. But at least since the Yom Kippur war, the most seriously uncritical reporting has been coming out of the Arab capitals. Here are some examples that press critics searching for all the current biases in Middle East reporting really ought to ponder.

Last December, ABC ran a documentary on President Sadat of Egypt that began with Howard K. Smith announcing: "It is a piece of luck for us [Americans] that Sadat is President." Since Sadat had a crucial role in the events leading up to the 400 per cent oil price increase that now threatens the industrial world and some parts of the third world, it was never quite clear why we should feel "lucky." Indeed, ABC interviewer Peter Jennings did not ask Sadat a single question about oil. Sadat was presented as a leader of farseeing vision who has never lost his touch with the Egyptian common man. He was described as universally popular, yet there was no discussion of the Egyptian political process (or lack of it). There were no conflicts or contradictions in Sadat's Egypt worth exploring.

Sadat's decision to go to war in October 1973 was explained as the logical move of a man who had diligently tried every avenue to peace without success. ABC's main evidence for this was a Cinderella story that Sadat tells, starring Shirley Temple Black. According to Sadat, Black was his dinner guest sometime in 1973 and was asked to take a message to President Nixon saying that Egypt was sincerely prepared for peace. Black confirms that she took the message across the seas but inexplicably was refused an audience with Nixon. This then convinced Sadat that all diplomatic options had been closed off to him and he had no choice but to go to war to break the diplomatic logjam. All this is accepted at face value by interviewer Jennings without a single probing question into the murkier aspects of Egyptian foreign policy.

ABC even managed to whitewash Sadat's wartime collaboration with the Nazis. We were told that this blemish on his otherwise exemplary career resulted not from any ideological attraction to the Third Reich but from the fact that the Germans were the "enemy of his enemy" (the British colonial occupiers). ABC almost made it sound like the natural thing for any liberation movement leader to

do, except that Nehru and Ho Chi Minh and almost all the others managed to resist the temptation.

Not long after ABC's obsequious documentary came *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year" cover story on King Faisal. It clearly reflected the revised Middle East perspectives of the American foreign policy establishment. Though somewhat critical of Faisal's oil politics, the piece was shaped by the view that the king is America's best hope in the area. He was described as having resisted the pressures of the "more radical" Arab states for higher prices and only "then changed his mind because of U.S. military and political support of Israel." It is clear where such an analysis of oil politics leaves Israel. *Time* did acknowledge that "Faisal hates Zionism with a cold passion." However that may be, *Time*'s conclusion is that "... marked progress toward peace on terms acceptable to the Arabs is absolutely essential before prices can soften; the Arabs will insist on that."

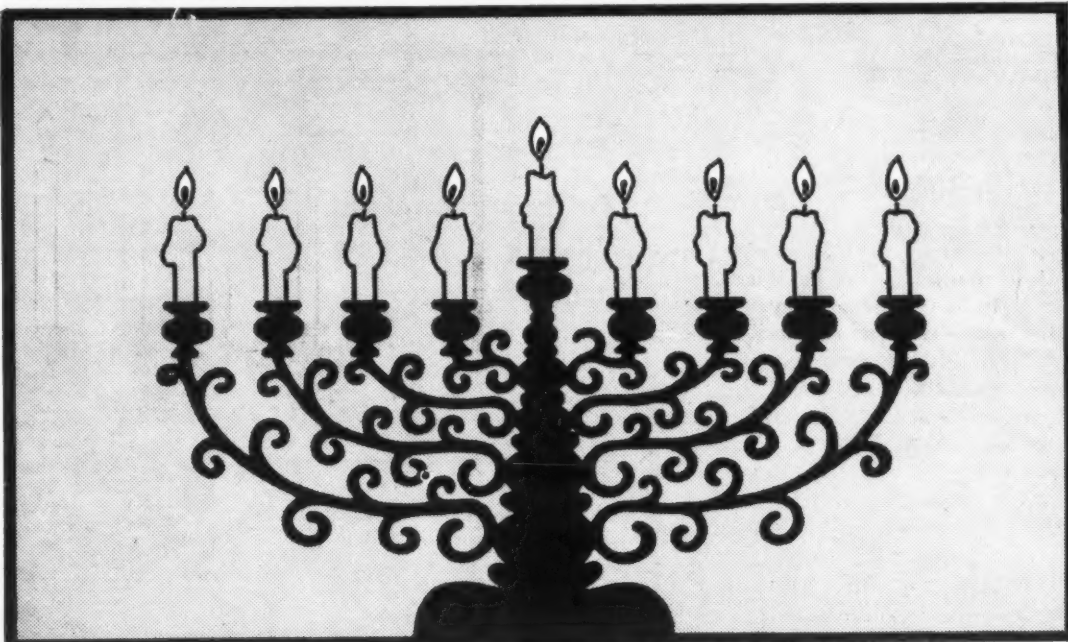
As for the magazine's portrait of Faisal, would anyone be surprised to find out that *Time* regards him as "surprisingly benevolent"? He is a man of the people who stops to talk to ordinary citizens on the street; he is bringing about progressive changes in the life of his people against the resistance of unnamed Arab conservatives; "he dislikes opulence." His philosophy? *Time* attributed to him these profound thoughts: "Revolutions can come from thrones as well as

He has the courage. Now all he needs is a little luck." [Emphasis added]

In that almost mindless paean to Sadat, *Newsweek* managed the extraordinary feat of making it appear that Sadat went to war only to achieve peace and not to get back land. Sadat's armies, of course, were practically surrounded and on the brink of military disaster when he was saved by U.S. and Soviet intervention.

Sadat's image as a moderate is enhanced in *Newsweek*'s reporting by positioning him as a "minimalist" along with Faisal, and comparing them to the "maximalists" in Libya and Iraq. It is a diplomatic version of the "good cop-bad cop" routine. Sadat is the "good cop"; if we don't play ball with him we will have to deal with the extremist "bad cops." What this neat analysis seems to ignore, however, is that if Israel had been overrun in 1967 or 1973, it would have been by the "minimalists"—the "maximalists" being far from the battlefield in both geography and capabilities. What good, then, does it do to pose the hypothetical actions of the "maximalists" except to absolve reporters of critically analyzing the actual policies of Sadat and other putative Arab moderates?

When the October 1974 Rabat conference, under the leadership of Sadat and Faisal, proclaimed the PLO as the sole bargaining agent for the Palestinians, it was, in the context of the existing diplomatic possibilities, an extremely pro-



from conspirators' cellars." Add to this the standard accolade from Henry Kissinger—"The king is a sort of moral conscience for many Arab leaders"—and you have another "sort of" Arab puff job.

Perhaps no other reporter has done more for the image of the new Arab leaders than *Newsweek*'s Arnaud de Borchgrave. Through close personal ties with the top leaders, he has gotten their word out and in turn has provided *Newsweek* with important news breaks. (To de Borchgrave's credit, he was the first reporter to take seriously Sadat's warning through 1973 that Egypt was determined to fight for Sinai.) De Borchgrave's biases are clearly his own. More serious is the extent to which *Newsweek* incorporates the new myths in its collective reporting. Consider this key paragraph in the magazine's Feb. 18 cover story of last year:

... when Sadat's armies struck last fall across the Suez Canal into Israeli-held territory and fought Jerusalem's vaunted fighting machine to a standoff, he became the Arabs' man of the hour. And if his efforts to bring peace to the Mideast succeed, he will have ended one of the most debilitating conflicts in the history of any of the world's peoples and set the Arabs firmly on the path to a far brighter future. "He just may succeed," says one Arab editor. "He has the brains.

vocative act. Even Israeli doves were frightened and saw it as a virtual declaration of war. But writing from Cairo two weeks later, *The New York Times*'s Henry Tanner reported: "Mr. Arafat, it is felt, is being drawn steadily into closer alliance with the moderate wing of Arab governments headed by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt."

Next, Arafat went off to the United Nations and offered his terms: Israel had the choice of dismantling its own state or facing a war of destruction. Not much there, one would think, to feed the moderate image. But if you play the good cop-bad cop game, wonders can be done. So here is Tanner once more from Cairo in the *Times* of Nov. 25:

Egyptian diplomats have been saying that Yasir Arafat and the other leaders of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the overall grouping for Palestine guerrilla units, are in fact accepting the existence of Israel as they seek international respectability through the United Nations and a part of the negotiating process at Geneva.

Official Cairo feels, however, that the organization's leaders could not have been expected to make that acceptance formal in a United Nations resolution at their first appearance there. If they had done so, so the thinking here goes, they would have exposed Mr. Arafat to wide and violent opposition within the Palestinian ranks.

Around this time, Arafat continued to send his "soldiers" into Israel to slaughter civilians—women and children at Beit Shean, the grenade victims in the movie theater in Tel Aviv—while the official Egyptian press applauded. Yet somehow the moderate image continued to stick to Arafat and his Egyptian sponsors because of that ever-present spectre of "extremists" off in the wings. It is as if the press had managed to convince the world that Richard Nixon was really a moderate fellow at the time he was bombing North Vietnam because Curtis Le May was then urging total war.

Even on its own terms, the good cop-bad cop way of looking at the Arab leadership is full of internal contradictions. On the one hand, the press builds up Sadat and Faisal as the Number One Arabs, powerful new heroes who have, in *Newsweek's* terms, "clout and cachet" to have their way in the Arab world and beyond. On the other hand, you can't judge their peace terms too harshly because any serious overture to Israel would put them under intolerable pressures from their extremist rivals. But the press can't have it both ways. Either the minimalists are strong enough to carry their will, in which case journalists should judge them strictly by what they do. Or they are not powerful enough, in which case it is incumbent on the journalists to judge the Arab posture not by the alleged good intentions of Sadat and Faisal, but by a common denominator that includes the input of the extremists.

Beginning early last month, the *Times* broke through the fog with a survey report by Seymour Topping from the Arab capitals. After some obviously hard probing, Topping recorded Arab officials admitting that even if Israel withdrew to its pre-1967 borders, they "could not guarantee in practical terms against a renewal of Arab pressures against those boundaries." Furthermore, reported Topping, "Arab officials did not offer convincing assurances that a Palestinian state on the West Bank and in Gaza would not become a new irredentist force in confrontation with Israel."

Topping's solid reporting provided the rare exception. Behind a guise of disinterested neutrality, U.S. reporters have avoided dealing with a radical truth: the Middle East conflict is asymmetrical in that, redundant as it must sound at this time, Israel's very existence is at stake. Most reporters have covered the conflict as if it were a border dispute between Italy and Yugoslavia over some disputed territory. Even when a leader such as Arafat publicly proclaims his goal of wiping Israel, or the "Zionist entity," off the map, the tendency of the press is to treat it as just overblown rhetoric. It has never been clear to me why Arab words are considered mere rhetoric when they threaten the destruction of Israel but Arab words are taken seriously when they speak of a desire for peace. Given this curious standard, it is not surprising that Arafat is sufficiently sanitized to make *People* magazine's list of the 25 most intriguing people of 1974, complete with a mini-biography that fails to include the word "terrorism."

One would have thought that last fall's session of the United Nations, if it didn't impress *People*, would at least have rung a few alarms at the *Times*. At first the paper *did* voice its editorial dismay over the "distasteful" performance of Arafat. And outsider Elie Wiesel wrote passionately on the Op-Ed page of his fears for Israel's survival. But after the dust settled, the *Times* took a more sanguine view:

Far from being isolated, therefore, as the Israelis saw themselves after the Palestine Liberation Organization's propaganda triumphs, there is an impressive body of world support for Israel's right to survive as an independent nation state alongside the Arabs, including the Palestinians.

Contrast that view with the reaction of some leading French intellectuals to the expulsion of

Israel from UNESCO last November. It was the Lebanese, the most "moderate" of all the Arab governments, that proposed the expulsion, saying: "Israel is a state that belongs nowhere." Led by Jean Paul Sartre, who is no particular friend of the Israeli government, the French group simply called the move for what it was: "The spiritual abolition of Israel justifies in advance her physical annihilation. It is the extermination process perfected by the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century."

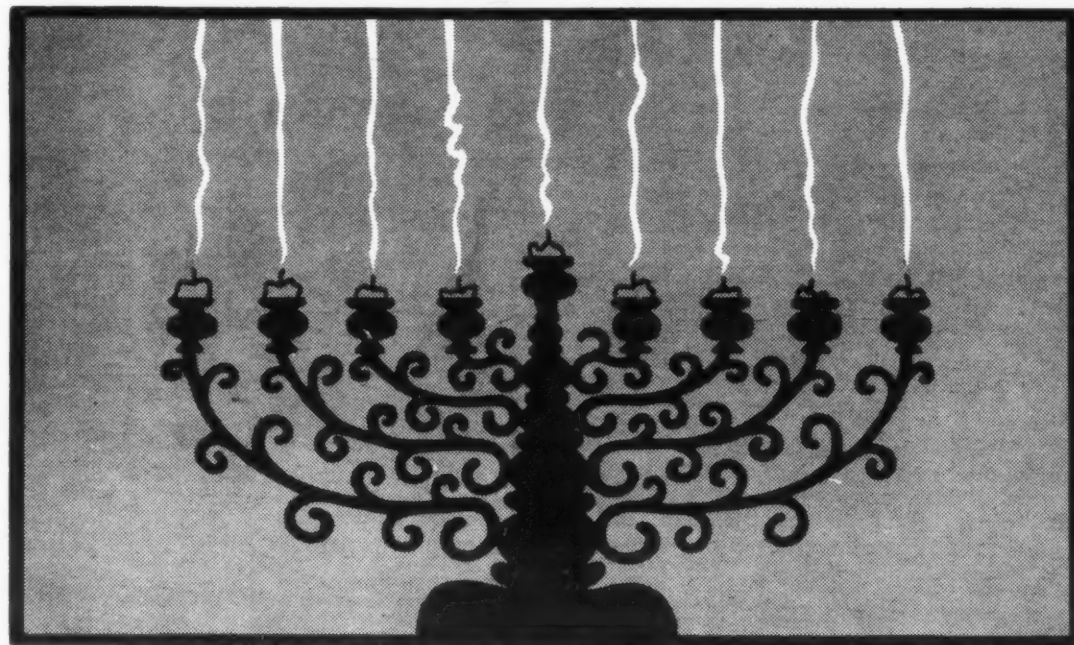
Of course, the French intellectuals live closer to the fact of historical nightmare than most Americans. But their perspective is crucial. The extraordinary support being asked for Israel in the U.S. is based on an equally extraordinary and historic vulnerability. It *matters* whether readers believe that recent events pose the question of Israel's survival or whether those who worry about its future should feel reassured by "an impressive body of world support."

The *Times*, of course, is generally regarded as a strongly pro-Israel paper. Yet I am struck by the detachment of most of its celebrated commentators on this, to me, clear and simple moral imperative. Of the house columnists, only C. L. Sulzberger writes from time to time about the perils facing Israel. James Reston's olympian view of the Arab-Israeli conflict was quaintly revealed in a long, philosophical interview with Henry Kissinger when he asked, in his only reference to the subject, whether "the Middle East thing" could be settled in time for the 1976 American bicentennial. The paper's left-liberal contingent

There has been some very tough writing about Israel's survival in the past year. But the bylines that come to mind are novelists Elie Wiesel (Op-Ed page) and Cynthia Ozick (*Esquire*), and social critic Irving Howe (*New York*). Where are the journalists? One of the rare exceptions is the aforementioned Richard Reeves, who is not Jewish but wrote, he said, "as an unashamed Jew lover."

New York City is the capital of media and the Jewish world. Yet the sad fact is that, aside from C. L. Sulzberger and Sidney Zion, the ex-*Times* man who is now writing for the *Soho Weekly News*, I can think of no Jewish journalist in the city who feels the survival of Israel is a cause worth writing about regularly, if at all. Where, in particular, are the committed journalists—David Halberstam, Jack Newfield, J. Anthony Lukas, Norman Mailer, Anthony Lewis, to name a few. Their crusades are legion: Vietnam, Chile, Watergate, the C.I.A., the banks, nursing homes, the American Imperium. But the possible destruction of Israel and the new Arab oil imperialism somehow fails to move them.

This is hardly a coincidence, it seems to me. More likely, Gay Talese's observation about the acute sensitivity of the Jewish media barons applies equally to Jewish journalists as a group. They seem to shrink from the unpleasant confrontations that might mark them as overly concerned with Jewish issues. And what could be more parochial than Israel, so easily identified with U.J.A. fund-raisers and Hadassah ladies?



Paul Richer

studiously avoids the subject. Anthony Lewis can write passionately about the bombing of Cambodia two years after the fact, but he is conspicuously silent about the moral aspects of Israel's plight. Tom Wicker had no reaction to the gun-toting entry of the PLO into the United Nations, nor to Israel's expulsion from UNESCO. But he did do a column castigating U.N. Ambassador John Scali for his speech attacking the automatic third world majorities that had engineered the actions against Israel.

And while the *Times* columnists back away from the tender subject, the Op-Ed page where they appear seems somehow constrained to periodically publish pieces from outsiders charging the press with being unfair to the Arabs. In a recent such contribution, an Arab-American professor of sociology is given the center of the page to complain:

As a result of distorted or misreported facts regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, everything the Arabs do is bad while everything the Israelis do is good and glorious.

When an Arab Palestinian defends himself, it is an act of terrorism, while similar Israeli behavior, such as bulldozing houses in East Jerusalem, is an act of self-defense.

Twenty-five years ago, when Israel was in mortal peril, its struggle moved two of our age's finest advocacy journalists—Arthur Koestler and I.F. Stone. Both cosmopolitan Jews, they did not think the cause of Israel too parochial. The England that Koestler was writing to was Israel's arch enemy. The United States, to which Stone sent his dispatches, had imposed an arms boycott on the new nation and public support in America was shaky. Their writing helped convince a large public that, given historical circumstances, the fate of Israel was much more than merely a Jewish concern.

A lot has changed since then, but not that much. As events unfold in the Middle East, it may yet become clear again that a new world order that would have Israel as its first victim will also not leave much room for the values advocacy journalists are fighting for. Then, perhaps, some of them may see that a journalism that includes as one of its serious commitments the survival of Israel is not tantamount to being anti-Arab, nor is it merely a "Jewish bias."

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'Candy Telegrams To Kiddyland'

BY KARL E. MEYER

A wordmonger reports on what it's like to enter the seductive world of television documentaries, where there is lots of enthusiasm, lots of money and lots of freedom—except the freedom to be boring.



Ner Beck

The following scene took place some months ago in a screening room in the ASCAP building in Manhattan, where ABC Television quarters its documentary division. It could as well have taken place in a hundred other television studios.

There are three of us—a producer, a film editor and me, in my capacity as a consultant to an ABC documentary. We are watching what are known as "dailies," i.e., fresh batches of unedited film, in this instance just received from Turkey. The film is being fed into a machine called a Steenbeck, and seeing this apparatus at work you get, perhaps better than anywhere else, a vivid glimpse of the splendors and miseries of electronic journalism.

The Steenbeck resembles a computer and is painted the same neutral shade of gray or brown; it has a console like a spaceship—an array of buttons, dials, switches and reels—beneath a single Cyclopean eye. It is the television equivalent of a typewriter, ingesting the raw material of reportage and imprinting it not on paper but on a small screen, a lozenge of light.

A reel snaps on. The lozenge flickers with blurred colors and then comes into focus on an ABC correspondent in Ankara. He is interviewing a Turkish antiquities official about the theft and smuggling of ancient art, the subject of our documentary. In clear if halting English the Turk describes what happens when a site is looted and an object ripped from its context, its cultural associations and even its legitimacy later cast in doubt. He discusses his own experience in vainly trying to get a complete photographic record of a treasure he believes was stolen from a tomb he was excavating. He is precise, patiently low-key and utterly convincing.

The screen goes blank. We have been sitting in judgmental silence for half an hour. The producer pronounces the final sentence, bleakly: "It's a turn-off. The accent is too thick, and he looks like a heavy. Maybe we can get a minute or two out of it."

Sic transit gloria telemundi. . .

For any wordmonger who serves a season in network television, the sessions with the Steenbeck are a peculiar form of torture. The machine reverses the art of the alchemist—it takes gold and converts it into lusterless lead. By the standards of American commercial television, lead is anything that impels viewers to switch dials during the commercial; lead is what is too foreign, too ambiguous, too boringly factual.

At despairing moments, so it struck me, what we were trying to do with our documentary was not to reveal truths but instead to illustrate truisms. On our show it was not enough to interview a cop—he had to *look* like a cop. Ditto archeologists, foreigners, museum curators and ruins. Once when we were on location in the Mexican Yucatan, the cameraman was exultant: "Great, great," he said, "when I look through here, I see a jungle," meaning a picture-postcard jungle, palm trees and all.

Our show, like many documentaries, turned out to be a picture-postcard album. Everything looked as it should, and not a viewer could have his

Karl E. Meyer, a [MORE] contributing editor, was a consultant last year on an ABC-TV "Close-up" documentary suggested by his book, The Plundered Past (Atheneum), an investigation of the illegal trade in stolen antiquities.

preconceptions jarred. Nor were the interviews "difficult." They were short, they were snappy, they were effulgent with "television values," i.e., pith, conflict, human interest. The show was adjudged a success; it got admirable reviews and was nominated for an Emmy. But somehow, in the process, the entire point of the program got lost.

We began with a burst of high seriousness and enthusiasm in the fall of 1973. I was invited to lunch with an ABC producer to discuss a series I had written for *The New Yorker* about the illicit trade in smuggled antiquities. The subject lent itself to television because the pillaged objects were often visually striking, and because the trade controversially implicated leading American museums and dealers. A contract was duly signed, and in November we were at work. "We've got to start with self-education," said the producer. "By the time the show is done, we have to know as much as the people we interview."

There were two months of manic activity. Files were accumulated, books were bought, scholars interviewed in a half-dozen cities, memorandums churned out by the ream. To anyone bred to the relative penury of daily print journalism, the prodigality of television was a matter of awe and envy.

But in another respect I was less enchanted, because commercial documentaries rest on a Faustian bargain with Madison Avenue. The ABC "Close-Up" series is contrived to attract sponsors; it broadcasts monthly at prime time and competes with sit-coms and old movies. At every point, the producer of a documentary is aware of what the advertising salesmen think of his show.

In newspaper terms, the process is very much like producing a special supplement on hi-fi equipment or the investment prospects in Zambia. During 15 years on *The Washington Post*, I cannot recall a single instance in which I was concerned about what the advertising department thought of what I wrote; in six months in television, I can hardly recall a moment when the front-office specter was wholly exorcised, because at every critical point the decisive consideration was the size of the audience we would entice or the danger of driving restless viewers to the bathroom, the refrigerator or (worst of all) Channel 2.

This concern about advertising was apparent in various isolated ways. First, there was the "treatment," a summary of what the show would contain. Written in hyped-up prose and promising an earthquake each second, the treatment was directed to potential advertisers. Then there were the periodic reports on how the "spots" were selling, reports which were like electric prods on the producer. Another symptom was the concern with who would narrate the show, because of the ratings implication. In the end, Howard K. Smith agreed to the job, and in grateful relief the producer remarked, "That's at least five million more, simply because Howard's doing it."

As the obsession with audience size increased, the serious concern with content diminished; the glow of the early earnest seminars insensibly turned into a quest for boffo.

In March 1974, we went to Mexico for five weeks' location shooting, but the boffo proved elusive. We were able to film striking Mayan ruins (good), interviews with suitably telegenic archeologists (better) and even, in a sidetrip to Costa

Rica, looters at work (best), but these were insufficient.

What was wanted was a bust, a filmed arrest of a North American caught with his hands on the pots. There were a series of interviews with Mexican authorities to see if ABC could have its cameras churning when a miscreant North American was brought to Mexican justice. No bust was possible, despite ABC's pleas. Still another possibility was an interview with an American, imprisoned for smuggling, in a Mexican jail. The final days of our stay were consumed by negotiations to bring about a prison interview in Lecumberi jail—protracted, frustrating talks with a half-dozen shrugging Mexican officials, none of whom was impressed by North American television.

We returned without the interview, and our perspective was so far askew that it seemed as if the success of the entire program rested on getting this crucial encounter on film. But back in New York, the producer discovered that the American in the Mexican jail had been turned in by his divorced wife, who lived in Maryland, and an ABC film crew sped to the Free State. The woman agreed to be filmed and told why she had informed on her former husband.

In soap opera terms, the interview with the ex-wife was boffo; in all other respects, it was irrelevant. But the footage looked good on the Steenbeck; it became a principal element of the finished documentary. "It's the one thing people will remember about the film," the producer said, in self-justification, and my own scattered poll showed he was right.

In the meantime, Howard K. Smith turned up in New York to interview the director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas Hoving, an encounter that was seen as the centerpiece of the film. An urbane and civilized man, Smith exuded goodwill, but he arrived tired and ailing, and it soon became apparent that he was inadequately prepared for the crucial interview; he lacked the facts for the telling follow-up questions. After the interview, Hoving had reason for his smile.

At this point, we were assembling the show, using footage shot in Mexico, in Turkey, at the Metropolitan and in gallery interviews with two leading New York art dealers, André Emmerich and Ben Heller. These latter encounters yielded a "confrontation" drama that the producer felt would give a lift to the show. Acting on a tip, ABC had its cameras ready at Kennedy Airport when U.S. Customs seized a crate of pre-Columbian art shipped to Emmerich from Switzerland. The number of artifacts in the crate had been miscounted, and this constituted a technical violation sufficient for a seizure, though it was a bit inflated for the purposes of the show.

Heller was in a different squeeze. He was the dealer who had sold the millionaire collector Norton Simon an Indian bronze statue of the god Shiva, which had been stolen from a temple in southern India. The price was a million dollars. When interviewed, Heller was at best disingenuous about his own role in the sale.

Such were the main elements, and we began to put together the final show—the "we" being myself, the associate producer, the production assistant and the producer. It was less a matter of composition than assembling building blocks in a child's toy castle. The show, in the grand theatrical tradition, was divided into "acts," with the commercials providing the intermissions. We had to strive for striking curtain lines, for visual effect, for boffo. We did our honest best.

But we had to operate within the iron dictates of format. All "Close-Up" documentaries open with a rapid-fire series of accusatory statements, followed by a breathless "Why?" In our case, the "tease lines" included: "This woman had her son arrested by Mexican police. Her ex-husband remains in a Mexican jail. Why?" "These men are grave robbers. In Costa Rica they earn more than teachers or taxi drivers. Why?"

One can understand the purpose of this technique—to grab audiences before the dial is fatally turned. But the unwelcome result is that the opening inescapably colors what follows; having promised the electrifying, one must deliver a few shockers as soon as the curtain rises. The documentary is thus front-loaded, and before an argument can be developed, atrocities must be displayed. The possibilities of understatement are lost, and in effect a verdict is handed down before the trial even begins. A second iron dictate is time. Seven sacrosanct minutes are reserved for commercials, no matter what. On a newspaper, it may be possible to enlarge the news hole by rescheduling ads if the news so warrants, but on television the commercials are inviolable.

Writing for television is a peculiar art. Nothing complicated is permitted, and it is really like caption writing. In what I remember as among the more memorable statements during six months in television, the producer advised: "When you write for television, think of it as sending candy telegrams to kiddyland." We dutifully wrote the telegrams, pausing only for small quarrels on words, i.e., when "curator" was used, the producer admonished, "They'll never get that in Peoria." An argument ensued, and "curator," *pace* Peoria, stayed in. Later on, the producer, to his credit, said during a similar argument, "Okay, okay, we'll say it that way or Meyer will bring up Peoria."

Far more difficult than writing was the process of compression—it was like squeezing an orange so that only the pulp remained, while the juices poured down the drain. Here the wasteful prodigality of television seemed at its melancholy worst. At some expense and at considerable trouble, we had commissioned the English archaeologist Ian Graham to film a ravaged Mayan site, and serendipitously, he also got unique footage of a looter at work. The former was never used, and the latter so swiftly shown that its real impact was lost. I had the feeling that if we were cutting from half as much film the final program would have been doubly good—our surfeit of riches was too much, and the temptation too strong to insert a smidgin of everything, if only to justify the cost.

Similarly, at one point we got from a State Department official a 500-word statement replying to a crucial claim made by Hoving about the Metropolitan Museum's limited financial liability in the event that a treasure the museum owned proved to have been stolen from Turkey. The question hinged on the precise language of a UNESCO treaty, and it would have taken a few minutes of air time to explain what we were talking about. In the final program, the whole issue was compressed into a throwaway sentence, and the opportunity lost to make an important legal point about the very subject of the program.

The script compositely written, the rushes of the show were screened on the Steenbeck for higher authority. It seemed peppy, it seemed vivid, the jungles were like jungles, but it was somehow wanting, and the boss of the documentary division suggested major changes in the placement of the building blocks. With some grumbling, the changes were made, and at this point the lawyers entered.

Emmerich and Heller had consulted counsel, and ABC was asked to delete entirely their interviews. Emmerich, who is president of the Art Dealers Association, had contacted Washington, and there were also calls from the office of Sen. Jacob Javits to U.S. Customs, protesting the supposed persecution of the art dealer. Platoons of lawyers showed up at ABC, but I am relieved to say the network resisted attempts at crude censorship.

What ABC did not resist was the possibly more insidious temptation of boffo. As finally structured, the documentary was entitled "The Culture Thieves," the title bestowed by the ad salesman, not the producer. It consisted of a series of minidramas, confrontations and hypervivid footage, interspersed with dogmatic and oversimplified narration. In the (I think) disastrous final cut, some ten minutes of interpretative footage were removed, though the marital problems of the Maryland antiquities smuggler survived intact. It was a document, but not necessarily a documentary. What was not used vanished into the outtake archives of ABC, somewhere in Tennessee, visual effluvia that will not leave even a trace behind.

In all the frantic final composition, somehow the vital point was never made—that the worst result of illicit looting is that the evidence of human history is irrevocably erased. The language in the interviews to support that point was simply snipped out. We were asserting, but never explaining, the very horror that was the essence of the show. Some months later, I received a call from the producer, who was reporting that the show had been nominated for an Emmy. I brought up the matter of the omission, saying that while the show had many good qualities, I was distressed that so vital a point was never effectively made. The producer was reflective. "You may be right," he replied, "but at least the point was implied."

The point was implied. For some weeks I thought about what that comment meant, and indeed implied. It surely meant, for one thing, that I had failed as a consultant by not protesting with enough disagreeable vehemence about so basic an omission. I have to confess that I was swept along by the seductive compulsions of electronic journalism, so much so that I began to share the pervasive assumption that *impact* was what we sought above all else, and that the measure of our success would be found in the size of our audience rather than the quality of our argument.

And here I was, only a tolerated outsider. How much worse for the salaried insiders. Most of my colleagues were people of conscience and sensibility; the chief of the ABC documentary division, Av Westin, has rightly been praised for the breadth and energy of his efforts; the producer of our show, Martin Carr, had confirmed his seriousness with earlier documentaries on other networks (including "Hunger in America" and "The Migrants"), and the associate producer, Alice Herb, was likewise a journalist with an almost painful sense of scrupulousness.

Why was it that together we had created a documentary whose most important point was only implied? The answer, I believe, is that we were allowed every freedom except the freedom to be boring. In a subtle and demeaning way, we had come to share the outlook of our commercial sponsors, in both the mode and the words of our presentation. It was not the people who contrived the program who lacked seriousness; it was the medium, as commercially constituted, that clouded the message. And for this, alas, there is no easy cure.

'Do You Still See The Kennedys?'

BY BARNEY COLLIER

Later this year, *The Dial Press* will publish *Hope and Fear in Washington (The Early Seventies)—A Story and Pictures of People in The Washington Press Corps*. Written by Barney Collier, with photographs by Maggi Castelloe, the book is in part a series of impressionistic portraits. The one that follows is of former NBC and PBS correspondent Sander Vanocur, who was interviewed in 1973 after he no longer appeared regularly on television.

I called information for Sander Vanocur's home telephone number and I said to the operator:

"I'd like Sander Vanocur in Washington, D.C."

And she said:

"Oh, thank you! That's a celebrity, isn't it?"

"Yes. Why?"

"I like him," she said.

I asked when she last saw Sander, and she said, "Not in a long time." I asked how she knew him, and she said, "From television." I asked her what she liked about him.

She said, "When he *used* to be . . . when he used to be, and when he was associated with the Kennedys . . . I thought he was fabulous."

"I'll tell him that," I said.

She said, "Thank you."

So I mentioned it to Sander when I reached him at his number.

Sander responded downheartedly, "That's it, isn't it? The Kennedy thing."

We made an appointment for lunch at Jean-Pierre's.

* * *

Sander entered Jean-Pierre's in an obvious hustle, waving a newspaper in one hand, while the other hand patted the maitre d's shoulder.

In a voice loud enough for anyone who cared to hear, the maitre d' announced, "Oh, hello, Mister Vanocur. How are you today?"

Sander looked around for faces in the dimly lighted room.

He was shown to the booth where I was sitting drinking a Bitter Lemon. We shook hands.

His eyes said, "I know your voice, but I've never seen you before in my life."

My eyes said, "But I've seen you before. Sit down and we'll talk about it."

Sander squeezed into the booth beside me. He was tight-skinned as a big sausage, with punky cheeks, a bad-boy's nose, and eyes that not even he could trust not to exaggerate.

I remembered Sander and his wife Edith in 1965. They walked late into the house of an NBC news producer one night for a party. Sander and Edith entered as stars.

Sander had worn a dark blue suit and smoked a cigar. He gave off the important air of just having come from a private party in Georgetown, or perhaps from one of the Kennedys. Edith was round and short and wore black stockings under white fishnet stockings, and black leather shoes with spiked heels. They looked like stars to me. I was proud to be at the same party with them. I was surprised only when I heard Edith speak. Edith spoke with an accent that sounded like Yiddish to me. Sander talked English with an educated Englishman's quality that he had picked up when he attended a college in England and later

Barney Collier and Maggi Castelloe are a freelance writing and photography team who live outside Washington, D.C.

"I'm keeping a long list of people who haven't returned my phone calls. And one day . . . One day I'll chop them off. Sander Vanocur isn't finished yet . . . I'll be back."

worked for the *Manchester Guardian*. He oozed success.

Now, ten years later, more of his forehead showed, and a bitterness replaced his old playful sparkle. Edith had since gone to work as a cooking writer for *The Washington Post*. She was writing a book about 100 ways to cook chicken. Sander said, "I've eaten chicken for dinner for almost a hundred straight days and I'm sick of the taste and the smell of it."

Sander ordered soft-shell crabs. I asked for baked clams.

Sander looked over at my glass. He said,



Sander Vanocur today

Maggi Castelloe

"You'll have some wine. *Not* that Bitter Lemon."

"All right."

I knew Sander was preparing to pick up the check.

Sander stuffed his bread and salad into his mouth.

Sander spoke loud enough for people to hear in the next alcove and at the table across the aisle. The alcove table people did not appear to listen, but a long-haired boy and a finishing school girl and their nervous mother did listen. Sander looked at their table until the boy noticed him, and I watched the boy's face as he worked to put Sander's voice and face together with some old television images. After a moment I saw in the boy's face the signs Doug Kiker once described to me as the "pop-eyed" recognition of a celebrity. Doug had said, "Once you see it, you'll always want it."

The boy whispered Sander's name. Sander relaxed and looked vaguely satisfied. He lowered his voice and gave me his attention.

"Tell me something," Sander said. "You know Dick Wald from the *Trib*. Off the record, what do you think of him?"

"He's cold as ice and as mean as a weasel when it comes to money."

Sander smiled.

"I'm glad you think so," he said. "I think so too."

"Is he the one who fired you?" I asked.

"I wasn't fired. It was a mutual understanding."

Sander explained that he and Dick Wald, who was then a vice president of NBC News, had met in New York not long before his contract was ready to expire.

Sander said, "I told him I wanted a freer hand in doing news, including political news. Dick said, 'We'll see if we can work it out,' and told me to hold on a few weeks. I held on and nothing happened. So I called Dick 'cause it was getting pretty close to the end and I wanted to know something. Dick said, 'Hold on a little longer.' So I did, and then nothing happened again. So then with just a few days left, I called him and he said, 'I'm going to Fisher's Island . . . with Jock Whitney and his family . . . over the weekend. We'll discuss it when I get back, and settle it once and for all.'"

"What happened?" I asked.

"Dick just said he was letting me go," Sander said. "He said they were having a budget squeeze. They figured I had a damned big contract and they might as well just chop it off."

"The Kennedy-Shirley MacLaine business didn't have anything to do with it?"

"Oh, hell. I don't think so. Not *that* much. They had a chance to save themselves a lot of money and they took it. I had a big contract then."

"Did you have an agent?" I asked.

"No. I never used agents. I acted on my own."

"Too bad. One might have kept you out of so much trouble."

The food came. Sander's soft-shell crabs were drowned in melted butter. My six clams were buried under a gray crumb putty.

The story in Washington about "the Kennedy thing" was that Sander too openly associated himself with the lives of the Kennedy family, instead of discreetly enjoying them on the side. Gossip said Sander had lost his journalist's mind. Sander was accused of openly praising the Kennedys, and making insulting statements about Kennedy rivals.

There was also the story about Shirley MacLaine. Maxine Cheshire of the *Post* was apparently the first to hear, and she reached Sander by telephone in California to ask him if it were true. Sander says to this day that he was outraged by the call and told Maxine that his personal life was none of her or the *Post*'s business.

He said, "I called up Ben Bradley . . . my friend Ben . . . and I told him, politely, that I didn't think that kind of story belonged in his newspaper. Ben said, 'Yeah, yeah, Sander, I understand.' But the story was published anyway."

I said, "How long did it last?"

"Three months," Sander said.

"Were you in love?"

"I want to skip the details . . . It's hurt Edith and me enough, and I make it a policy never to talk about that . . . period."

After his contract with NBC expired, Sander went to work for National Public Television for \$85,000 a year. It was said at the time that

NBC's Vanocur interviewing the late Senator Dirksen on the floor of the 1964 Republican convention; reporting the returns later that year, and on the set of "First Tuesday," of which he was anchorman from 1969 to 1971.



public television required newscasting celebrities to attract larger audiences. It was hoped that large audiences would in turn generate enough political power to persuade the Congress to give public television enough money each year to grow. Sander's salary was printed in the public record, and at first no particularly critical notice was taken of it. But Sander was an easy target for politicians who wanted to remove "Kennedy men" from government jobs. Sander said both the *Washington Post* and the *Star* printed stories about his salary. It was pointed out that Sander was making more money than a Congressman. And so, in 1972, when his two-year contract expired, Sander was cut from the payroll of public television.

"Did people stop inviting you places?" I asked.

"They dropped off," Sander said.

"Do you still see the Kennedys?"

"Oh, Christ, I haven't been out there . . . we haven't been to Ethel's in months . . . months."

"Are you looking for work?"

"I call people."

"Do they call you back?"

A thought so bitter passed across his mind that his face was distorted into a snarl without his being able to help it.

"I'm keeping a list," Sander said. "I'm keeping a long list of people who haven't returned my telephone calls. And one day . . . One day I'll chop them off. Sander Vanocur isn't finished yet . . . I'll be back."

"Are you getting any offers?" I asked.

"They're not exactly tearing down my telephone to make me offers."

"Does anyone call?"

"People for Edith."

"What about Ben Bradlee?"

"Not yet," he said.

"Do you expect to hear from him about the possibility of writing a column for the *Post*?"

"We're still in the talking stage."

"It must be hard to live on less than \$85,000 a year."

"It's not that. It's . . . It's . . . It's that it's

killing me not to be out reporting the Watergate every day. I can't stand just sitting back and not being out there reporting . . . doing my job."

"Why don't you report for a newspaper somewhere?"

He bit his lower lip.

"Not yet."

"Well if it's *killing* you not to be on television, why not find some television station to report for? You don't want to kill yourself, do you?"

"I didn't say 'not being on television' was killing me," he corrected. "I said not being able to report the Watergate."

"So why not report it for a newspaper or magazine? Why work for some foundation that just 'thinks' about newspapers and television, instead of working in television? If it's killing you, why let it?"

"You don't understand," Sander said.

"You can't stand *not* working for television. It's *not* killing you *not* to be writing for a small-town paper in Illinois, and it's *not* killing you *not* to be working for *Harper's* or *Atlantic*. It's killing you *not* to be on the television so people can see you again."

I thought there might be a long chance Sander was going to tell me I'd gone too far, but Sander acted like a gentleman. He thought what I said over and nodded his head up and down.

"I guess so," is what he said.

Twice more Sander corrected me for saying it was killing him *not* to be on television.

"I didn't say that. That's what *you* say. It's not my quote," Sander said.

"It's what you mean," I said.

"Yeah, but it's not my quote."

"I won't quote you on it."

I ate all of my clams under putty, but Sander ate only half of his soft-shell crabs. When the waiter took Sander's dish away, I said, "Sander, you haven't finished."

Sander had ordered the crabs at \$5.50, and I had ordered the clams at \$2.25. Sander had tried to entice me into crabs by saying, "Edith tells me

the crabs are in season right now. They're delicious."

When his dish was taken away with \$2.75 worth of crab on it, Sander looked at me out of the corner of his eyes and said, "Barney, I'm on a diet. Too damned rich for me."

He grabbed the check. He gave the waiter a credit card. I said, "No, I'll take care of this. I invited you." I didn't say anything about his choosing the place.

"I'll take it. I'll take it," he said.

He blocked my arm with his shoulder to prevent me from reaching over to examine the check.

"Art Buchwald wanted to pay for my lunch the other day, too," he muttered to himself.

I was thinking how the tongue that once talked to millions of people on television was now left to talk too loud in Jean-Pierre's. Down the road may be dreary oblivion. Sander broke directly into my thoughts.

"You're not going to put me in that 'down the road to destruction' character, are you?"

"I don't know," I said. "I hope not, but I don't know."

"Well, I'm *not*."

"I hope not."

On the way out, Sander said to the maitre d', "Save me a salami."

"You have salami?" I asked the maitre d'.

"Oui, monsieur," he said. "Maybe you want one, monsieur?"

"I don't know," I said.

"Monsieur Vanocur gets one here all the time."

I imagined how Jean-Pierre's would be a funnier place with salamis hanging from the ceiling. So I asked, "Are you in the salami brokerage business?"

The maitre d' stood back at attention.

"Of course *not*, sir. Only occasionally for special people, like Mister Vanocur."

"Well save one for me," I said. "For the next time I come in."

THE TEN BEST TEN BEST



BY JAMES MONACO

Is it a vestige of latent religious impulses, like the Ten-best Commandments or the eightfold way? Is it a symptom of a psychotic rage for order? Cultural historians are divided on the question, but what is eminently clear is that the central ritual of the art and industry of film each year is the critics' ten-best list. Fifty-five years ago, the august members of the National Board of Review wheeled out their mechanical calculators and began the Sisyphean task of bringing a modicum of order to the burgeoning American film industry by constructing a list of the best films that had appeared during the year. They were quickly joined by the editors of *Film Daily* who, in 1922, democratized the process by polling more than 400 nominal film critics each year and compiling the results. By the middle sixties, nearly everybody who wrote about movies—and who could count to ten—was looking forward with anticipation to the last week in December every year, when the orgasmic rush of Christmas screenings was over and the books could finally be closed, the artistic year safely summarized and locked in print.

Indeed, the Ten-Best List ritual has never been healthier. Critics enjoy the game because it gives them a sense of authority that they otherwise sorely miss during the year, as audiences—more often than not—blithely ignore their recommendations. (Check *Variety's* list of top ten grossers for 1974 and compare it with the critics' lists.) Distributors and exhibitors look fondly on the annual totting up because the odds, as we shall see, are greatly in their favor. Audiences like the lists because they relieve them from the weighty obligation of having to catch all those films that are *not* included. In all, everybody benefits from the annual purge.

But the game has gotten out of hand. At last count, for example, the prestigious National Society of Film Critics had 25 members, and the New York Film Critics Circle counted 31 reviewers within the pale. For the sake of argument, let's say there are another 25 major critics who don't like to join clubs—or haven't been asked. Taking duplicate memberships into account, if each of these critics publishes a ten-best list it's easy to see that in any given year as many as 750 films *could* appear on *somebody's* list. Now only 250 or so movies are released in the U.S. in an average year, so the odds are very good that, if you look hard enough, any film you can name is going to be found on at least one

James Monaco, a freelance writer who specializes in film, is the author of The New Wave, to be published by Oxford University Press later this year.

list, which is why those wily distributors enjoy the game. Out of the 32 first-run films advertised in *The New York Times* on Jan. 3, 1975 (before many of the ten-best lists had even been published), a full 20 of them (63 per cent) carried a ten-best tag. But that's a matter of quantity. What about quality? Just as with movies, some ten-best lists must be better than others. Thus, to help the moviegoing readers of [MORE], we have compiled the first annual Ten Best Ten Best List.

In a meticulous process that lasted for days, we examined dozens of lists nationwide—from the Big Apple to the smallest hamlets. Aware that we were breaking new ground, we decided that the fairest method of evaluation would be numerical. The point system we eventually worked out took into account such values as originality, accuracy and style, while leaving a certain amount of flexibility to deal with such intangibles as wit and neatness.

To determine accuracy, the formula was

$$\frac{FV}{NF} = A$$

(where FV is the Film Value, a figure equivalent to the number of times a particular film appeared on other lists, and NF is the Number of Films on the critic's list). This formula proved the best way to give an index of how close each critic came to thinking like his or her peers. A "perfect" score in the accuracy competition would have been 5.0—the kind of prescience that verges on the mystic. No one scored that high, but, surprisingly, nine out of ten of our top critics scored better than 3.3—and only 15 per cent of the total number of films chosen appeared on only a single critic's list. Formidable figures, indeed.

The formula for originality was simpler in design. It seemed that the best way to judge this elusive quality was simply to express it in terms of accuracy:

$$O = \frac{1}{A}$$

In other words, if nobody else but you thought film *X* was one of the ten best, you may not have been accurate but you certainly were original. We set a basic cutoff point, and every list that made the top ten was required to include at least one film that nobody else thought worthy. Anybody quick enough with numbers will see that accuracy and originality tend to cancel each other out. Therefore, the best of the best, that critic deemed to be *primus inter pares*, had to compile a list that perfectly balanced these two antinomic qualities. Three lists—those of Goodwin, Haskell and Sarris—fit this prescription (3.7 accuracy, 0.027 originality, if you really

care). However, since a three-way tie looks messy, especially when you're doing your first-ever list of the ten best ten best, we decided to give top honors to Mike Goodwin.

Why? First of all, he's our friend. More important, Goodwin's list simply had more *nous ne savons quoi* than the others. Coming out of an apprenticeship with *Rolling Stone* and *Take One*, the most popular film magazines in the country, Goodwin recently became firststringer for San Francisco's *City* magazine. He scored very strongly in originality, pulling in *Heroes Two* from absolute leftfield (he describes it as "the central episode in Hong Kong Kung Fu director Chang Cheh's famous Shao Lin Trilogy"), and resurrecting Martin Scorsese's *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* out of the distant (1968) past. (This is fair, since the film didn't play in San Francisco until this past year.) Goodwin also received bonus points for precision, zeroing in on "Le Roi d'Yvetot," one of three episodes in *The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir*. All of the other critics who listed that film cited it as a whole, which seemed to us rather sloppy.

Notice, too, Goodwin's extraordinarily supple range. He moves with versatility and grace from films by the acknowledged masters (Renoir, Bergman) on through crowd-pleasers (*Chinatown*), right on over to coterie and cult material of the most obscure order (*Heroes Two*, *Phantom of the Paradise*). He skillfully sidesteps *Godfather II* (even though Coppola owns *City* magazine) but finds Richard Lester worthy of two spots on the ticket. (The effective judgment of Lester's films is something of a touchstone in this business. If a critic can see past their evident popular nature to the wit and style beyond, he or she is demonstrating real perspicacity. Goodwin was the only one of our ten best to include both *Juggernaut* and *Three Musketeers* on his list.) This is list-making of an extraordinarily assured and comprehensive nature. Goodwin should go far.

As for the runners-up, here they are in alphabetical order:

- **JOY GOULD BOYUM:** Boyum writes a literate and thoughtful column for *The Wall Street Journal*. She almost always provides an interesting perspective on the films she discusses, but she hasn't yet learned the art of the "marquee line," so her name isn't as well known as it might be. Seldom does she provide the kind of tag line ("Possibly the Most Important Film of 1974!"—Boyum, *WSJ*) that producers like to quote and that gets a critic's name before the public in display ads, on posters and on marquees. Withal, her Ten-Best List is highly accurate (4.1 points). But, as a result, it is not particularly original. (Nobody ever said this was easy.) Boyum should do better in future competitions as she learns to sacrifice overrated literacy for a little punch and pizzazz.

- **VINCENT CANBY:** Any list of the ten best ten best lists would have to include Canby, who is probably the most powerful critic writing today, but Vince very nearly didn't make it in '75. There was an insouciant tone to his roster that ill befitted a critic of Canby's clout. Ten-Best Lists are serious business, and Canby doesn't seem to appreciate that fact. He lost points for sloppiness (11 choices instead of ten) and inaccuracy (*Daisy Miller*). Making a special place for the film by Peter Bogdanovich (the George Plimpton of Hollywood) wasn't considered a sign of originality—but just plain ornery. Also there seemed a taint of payola here, since Canby also saw fit to give Bogdanovich and *Daisy Miller's* star, Cybill Shepherd, an additional prize, "The Eddie and Debbie Award" for 1974.

- **KATHLEEN CARROLL:** Like her newspaper, the *Daily News*, Carroll is often overlooked in serious critical circles. But her list had a certain charm entirely lacking elsewhere, and this made her a strong contender.

(continued on page 16)

REST OF THE BEST

Joy Gould Boyum

The Wall Street Journal

1. The Mother and the Whore (Jean Eustache)
2. Amarcord (Federico Fellini)
3. Lacombe, Lucien (Louis Malle)
4. Scenes From a Marriage (Ingmar Bergman)
5. The Conversation (Francis Ford Coppola)
6. Badlands (Terrence Malick)
7. The Phantom of Liberté (Luis Buñuel)
8. The Three Musketeers (Richard Lester)
9. Les Violons du Bal (Michel Drach)
10. The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (Ted Kotcheff)

Vincent Canby

The New York Times

1. Amarcord (Federico Fellini)
2. Badlands (Terrence Malick)
3. California Split (Robert Altman)
4. Claudine (John Berry)
5. Daisy Miller (Peter Bogdanovich)
6. Harry and Tonto (Paul Mazursky)
7. Lacombe, Lucien (Louis Malle)
8. Man is Not a Bird (Dusan Makavejev)
9. The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir (Jean Renoir)
10. The Phantom of Liberté (Luis Buñuel)
11. Scenes From a Marriage (Ingmar Bergman)

Kathleen Carroll

New York Daily News

1. Scenes From a Marriage (Ingmar Bergman)

2. Chinatown (Roman Polanski)
3. The Godfather, Part II (Francis Ford Coppola)
4. Love and Anarchy (Lina Wertmüller)
5. A Woman Under the Influence (John Cassavetes)
6. The Conversation (Francis Ford Coppola)
7. Amarcord (Federico Fellini)
8. Lacombe, Lucien (Louis Malle)
9. A Free Woman (Volker Schlöndorff)
10. The Last Detail (Hal Ashby)

Jay Cocks

Time

1. Amarcord (Federico Fellini)
2. Antonia: A Portrait of the Woman (Jill Godmilow, Judy Collins)
3. Badlands (Terrence Malick)
4. Chinatown (Roman Polanski)
5. The Conversation (Francis Ford Coppola)
6. The Godfather, Part II (Francis Ford Coppola)
7. The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir (Jean Renoir)
8. The Seduction of Mimi (Lina Wertmüller)
9. The Phantom of Liberté (Luis Buñuel)
10. The Three Musketeers (Richard Lester)

Jim D'Anna

WVRV radio, New York City

1. Scenes From a Marriage (Ingmar Bergman)
2. Amarcord (Federico Fellini)
3. Chinatown (Roman Polanski)
4. The Godfather, Part II (Francis Ford Coppola)
5. The Conversation (Francis Ford Coppola)

6. Wedding in Blood (Claude Chabrol)
7. Ali—Fear Eats the Soul (Rainer Werner Fassbinder)
8. Badlands (Terrence Malick)
9. The Pedestrian (Maximilian Schell)
10. The Three Musketeers (Richard Lester)

David Elliott

Chicago Daily News

1. Lacombe, Lucien (Louis Malle)
2. Day For Night (François Truffaut)
3. California Split (Robert Altman)
4. The Mother and the Whore (Jean Eustache)
5. Thieves Like Us (Robert Altman)
6. Chinatown (Roman Polanski)
7. Mean Streets (Martin Scorsese)
8. Harry and Tonto (Paul Mazursky)
9. The Conversation (Francis Ford Coppola)
10. Antonia: A Portrait of the Woman (Jill Godmilow, Judy Collins)
11. Scenes From a Marriage (Ingmar Bergman)
12. The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (Ted Kotcheff)

Molly Haskell

The Village Voice

1. Scenes From a Marriage (Ingmar Bergman)
2. Charulata (Satyajit Ray)
3. Chinatown (Roman Polanski)
4. Antonia: A Portrait of the Woman (Jill Godmilow, Judy Collins)
5. Wedding in Blood (Claude Chabrol)
6. The Mother and the Whore (Jean Eustache)
7. Juggernaut (Richard Lester)
8. Harry and Tonto (Paul Mazursky)
9. The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir (Jean Renoir)
10. Young Frankenstein (Mel Brooks)
11. The Front Page (Billy Wilder)

Martin Levine

Newsday

1. Going Places (Bertrand Blier)
2. The Mother and the Whore (Jean Eustache)
3. Juggernaut (Richard Lester)
4. Ali—Fear Eats the Soul (Rainer Werner Fassbinder)
5. Love and Anarchy (Lina Wertmüller)
6. Stavisky . . . (Alain Resnais)

Andrew Sarris

The Village Voice

1. Wedding in Blood (Claude Chabrol)
2. Juggernaut (Richard Lester)
3. Scenes From a Marriage (Ingmar Bergman)
4. The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir (Jean Renoir)
5. Chinatown (Roman Polanski)
6. Ali—Fear Eats the Soul (Rainer Werner Fassbinder)
7. Man is Not a Bird (Dusan Makavejev)
8. Young Frankenstein (Mel Brooks)
9. The Front Page (Billy Wilder)
10. The Last Detail (Hal Ashby)

And now for what everybody went to see:

The Top Grossing Films of 1974

Variety

1. The Sting (George Roy Hill)	\$68,450,000
2. The Exorcist (William Friedkin)	\$66,300,000
3. Papillon (Franklin Schaffner)	\$19,750,000
4. Magnum Force (Ted Post)	\$18,300,000
5. Herbie Rides Again (Robert Stevenson)	\$17,500,000
6. Blazing Saddles (Mel Brooks)	\$16,500,000
7. The Trial Of Billy Jack (est.) (Tom Laughlin)	\$15,000,000
8. The Great Gatsby (Jack Clayton)	\$14,200,000
9. Serpico (Sidney Lumet)	\$14,100,000
10. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (reissue, George Roy Hill)	\$13,820,000

[MORE] 15

"THE BEST OF THE YEAR'S TEN BEST!"*

* "... Extraordinarily supple range. He moves with versatility and grace from films by the acknowledged masters... through crowd-pleasers... right on over to coterie and cult material of the most obscure order... Listmaking of an extraordinarily assured and comprehensive nature. Goodwin should go far."

—James Monaco, [MORE]

CITY MAGAZINE'S MICHAEL GOODWIN

1. CHINATOWN (Roman Polanski)
2. THE CONVERSATION (Francis Ford Coppola)
3. EVERYTHING READY, NOTHING WORKS (Lina Wertmüller)
4. HEROES TWO (Chang Cheh)
5. JUGGERNAUT (Richard Lester)
6. PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE (Brian de Palma)
7. LE ROI D' YVETOT, from THE LITTLE THEATRE OF JEAN RENOIR (Jean Renoir)
8. SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE (Ingmar Bergman)
9. THE THREE MUSKETEERS (Richard Lester)
10. WHO'S THAT KNOCKING AT MY DOOR? (Martin Scorsese)

THE TEN BEST TEN BEST

(continued from page 14)

Carroll's list also has—believe it or not—more politics than nearly any other of the ten-best lists, with *Love and Anarchy*, *A Woman Under the Influence* and *The Last Detail* sharing that rare quality: a real and deeply felt understanding of working-class characters and their situations. *Love and Anarchy* and the Cassavetes-Rowlands film also combined with *A Free Woman* to give Carroll bonus points for a strongly feminist orientation.

• **JAY COCKS:** There isn't much to say about Cocks's list, really. O.K., *Antonia*—which hardly anyone outside of New York has seen—is a fairly courageous choice for a critic working for a mass-circulation national magazine, but then there are two Coppolas and the ever-present *Chinatown*. If you want to know the truth, Cocks got in on a kind of quota system. We wanted to be sure to include one of the newsmagazine lists, and Cocks just barely beat out Paul Zimmerman of *Newsweek*, mainly on the basis of high accuracy (4.0 on our scale) and because he was born in the Bronx.

• **JIM D'ANNA:** The only broadcast critic represented on our list, D'Anna's list is unexceptionable. The individual choices aren't much, but the mix is something else again. Like others of the new breed of critic, D'Anna doesn't think twice about including very popular films like *Godfather II* and *Three Musketeers* together in the same list with R. W. Fassbinder's subtle German pastiche and Claude Chabrol's very Frenchified Hitchcockian melodrama.

• **DAVID ELLIOTT:** Dave Elliott's list isn't bad—he's got *The Mother and the Whore* and *Antonia*, which certainly shows a wide range of sexual politics, at least. But it suffers because Elliott has to watch movies in Chicago. Now, Chicago is a lot of great things, but one thing it isn't is the best place to see films. But that's not David Elliott's fault, and although a lot of people outside Chicago know about Roger Ebert (*Sun-Times*), we thought Dave Elliott's quiet, effective and thorough work deserved some recognition.

• **MOLLY HASKELL:** One of our brightest younger critics, Molly scored strong right across the board, receiving extra points for her devotion to Claude Chabrol and her twin recognition of *Mother and the Whore* and *Juggernaut* (the oddest couple on the lists). As half of moviedom's only wife-husband team, she also scored for the chutzpah she and Andrew Sarris showed in including both *Young Frankenstein* and *The Front Page*.

• **MARTIN LEVINE:** Levine is second-stringer for Long Island's *Newsday*. Now, one of the tricks that turns second-stringers into leading critics is the display of a proper contempt for the established values of the trade, and Levine shows a classy contempt for the conventions of ten-besting here by deigning to include only six films on his list. It's a bit of a cheat of course (you're supposed to think that Levine has, maybe, better taste than those promiscuous rivals who managed to find ten or a dozen good films during the past year), but it does nevertheless call attention to Levine's name in the layout of lists. So, special points to young Martin for careersmanship.

• **ANDREW SARRIS:** What can we say about Andy? He might not like to hear it put this way, but Sarris is certainly the Grand Old Man of American Film Criticism right now. In the Ten-Best game, he has no peers, having literally written the book (*The American Cinema: Directors and Directions*) which ranks the work of 200 filmmakers in 11 precise categories. It's the *ne plus ultra* of ten-

bestmanship. Sarris used to poll his readers for an auxiliary list, we should note, but he's given that up, he says, since the time a few years ago when "the Andy Warhol crowd packed the list." Sarris could make up a masterpiece of a list in his sleep. (When called, he hadn't yet compiled his current Best; he phoned back 15 minutes later with the finished product you see here!) His 1974 list naturally scored high in all categories, but was especially notable for its elegance and finesse. Only the father of American auteurism could make the necessary but subtle differentiations that put Claude Chabrol at the head of the class and give *Juggernaut* a slight (but very real) lead over the more "respectable" *Scenes From a Marriage*. Sarris shows us how it is possible to wring a residue of truth out of the hung-up laundry of ten-best lists, and any honor roll that includes both *Man Is Not a Bird* (the best Yugoslav film of the sixties) and *Young Frankenstein* (one of Mel Brooks's maturer efforts) has got to be acknowledged as "state of the art"!

A lot of people ask us: how exactly do you go about making up a ten-best list? Well, you don't have to be a working critic to do it. You can indulge in ten-besting in the privacy of your own home. Here's how:

Buy yourself a small, compact notebook and start taking notes of the films you see—title, director, leading actors and so forth. *Don't*—repeat do not—try to evaluate the films as you see them! This is not the way the pros do it. Wait until the end of the year, when you've got some perspective.

About the third week in December or a little before, begin preparations for your ten-best list. Check your notebook. If you have, say, only ten or eleven films entered, you ought to think seriously about not compiling a list at all. Don't feel bad. Thousands of perfectly normal, happy people in all walks of life don't go to the movies regularly.

If you have between, say, 20 and 40 films in your notebook, then you can probably compile your list relatively quickly. Simply run down the list and make an instinctive mark (a check or a little star will do) next to the titles of the films you remember fondly. In no time at all you will probably have ticked off ten films. There's your list.

If, however, you find you profligately check off an exorbitant number of films, or if you have 50 or more in your film notebook to begin with, you will have to follow the more complex procedure outlined below. Most of our star critics use this technique, or something like it. (Mike Goodwin, our first-place finisher, says he writes down the titles on his list as they come to him in a dream on Michaelmas Eve every year, but aside from weirdo gambits like this, it's true that most critics follow a system every bit as mindless as this one.)

1. Cross out any film that you can't remember at all. Chances are that out of a total of 50 films, your average viewer will draw a complete blank on seven or eight. Don't worry about this: of that seven or eight, it's likely that only one or two will be really important films, but that's the breaks.

2. Next, set up some perfectly arbitrary preliminary standards for yourself, such as "no films eligible that weren't released in the current calendar year," or "no black-and-white films allowed," or "no films without an immediately recognizable (by me) story line." You'll have to cut some of your favorites, but your list will be down to manageable proportions now. If you've been working correctly you should only have about 30

films left.

3. The final sifting is more scientific—something like the swimsuit competition for Miss Americas. Now you must work out some real, honest-to-Griffith cinematic standards. This is the tough part that separates the pros from the dilettantes. What kinds of movies do you like? Is political content important? If so, assign a numerical value to each of the films on your list—a politics quotient. Color? Sex? Violence? Intelligibility? Unintelligibility? Little men who talk funny? (This is known as the Peter Lorre factor in professional circles.) Proceed for each of these qualities as for the first. **WARNING:** working out values isn't as easy as it looks, which, after all, is why we have critics in the first place.

Now all you have to do is draw a line under the tenth entry on your worksheet, and it's finished. Your own ten-best list! It's as easy as that. And—who knows?—movie criticism is one of the very few growth industries in the middle seventies. People with no more experience than you are getting jobs every day on TV, in radio, in newspapers and magazines. Who knows but that, come this time next year when we're compiling [MORE]'s second annual ten best ten best list, you might not find yourself right there in the running. ■

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Igniting The Towering Inferno

BY MICHAEL DORMAN

On April 3, 1972 Thomas N. Scortia sat before the television set in his San Francisco home watching a documentary. As he tells it, suddenly it dawned on him that the subject of the program—the difficulty of fighting fires in high-rise buildings—could provide the basis for a big-money novel and an even bigger-money motion picture. The next morning, Scortia, a physiochemist who had abandoned a career in the aerospace industry to write science fiction, telephoned editor Lee Wright at Random House in New York and began negotiations toward a book contract.

Wright encouraged him to proceed. But what neither she nor Scortia knew was that in Santa Fe, N.M., Richard Martin Stern was already well into the writing of a novel built around an identical theme. Fire breaks out in a high rise. Thousands are trapped. Who will live, who will die? Who are these possible victims? Who are their wives, husbands, mistresses, lovers? How many lives will be complicated, shattered or exalted by the fire? In short, the recipe for such stories from *Grand Hotel* to *Airport*, only this time flambé.

Scortia plunged into his research. An indefatigable hunter of details, he prepares what some book editors describe as the lengthiest outlines they have ever seen. In this case, the research burden proved so heavy that Scortia asked Frank Robinson, then working in Chicago as a *Playboy* editor, to collaborate on the book. Robinson, a former editor of *Rogue* and *Cavalier*, had bought some of Scortia's science-fiction stories years earlier and had encouraged him to become a full-time author. At Scortia's request, Robinson left *Playboy* and joined him in San Francisco and work on the book began in earnest.

Then the Random House connection collapsed. Editor Wright made a sizable offer (no one involved will say how much) that Scortia was prepared to accept. But due to a communications failure, Scortia assumed he and Robinson would each be getting the figure Random House had offered. When they learned they would be getting half of what they anticipated, they asked that the advance be doubled. When Random House said no, Scortia and Robinson, aided by New York agent Richard Parks of Curtis Brown Ltd., went hunting for another publisher.

By September 1972, five months after the project had been launched, a contract was signed with Doubleday, the authors splitting an amount in the "comforting five-figure range," according to Scortia. The contract was drawn up on the basis of a detailed outline and two sample chapters of the work in progress, titled *The Glass Inferno*.

By that time, Richard Martin Stern was finishing his own novel, *The Tower*. Stern, at 59, had been freelancing full-time for 27 years, was a prolific contributor to *The Saturday Evening Post* and had written 15 books.

With little more than an idea and a bit of research—gleaned chiefly from an architect friend and a few books from the architect's library—Stern approached editor James Wade at David McKay Co. toward the end of 1971 about writing a high-rise fire novel. Wade, a recent arrival at McKay from the World Publishing Co., had edited Stern's

Michael Dorman is the author of The Infernal Money-Making Machine, a book about Robert Vesco that will be published this spring by G. P. Putman's Sons.

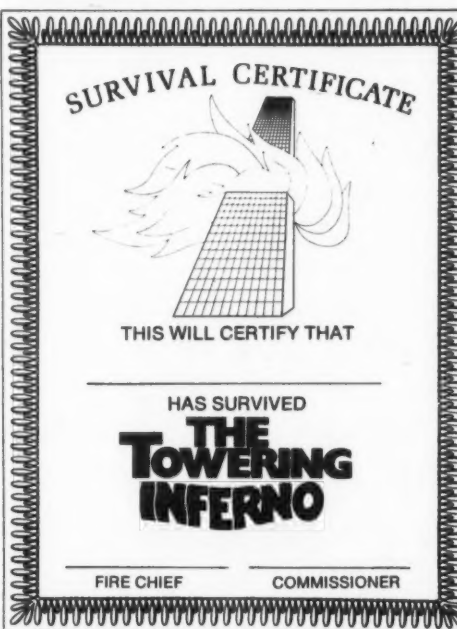
How three authors wrote two books—*The Tower* and *The Glass Inferno*—that were made into one movie that was produced by two companies—and everybody made a lot of money.

previous novel, *Stanfield Harvest*. He liked Stern's new idea and gave him a contract calling for a relatively modest \$20,000 advance.

It took Stern about a year to finish *The Tower*, which was initially scheduled for publication in June 1973 but delayed by production and sales considerations until October of that year. Six months before its publication, however, competing authors Scortia and Robinson learned of Stern's novel. Richard Parks, their agent, had

To hype their hot property, Warner Bros. and Twentieth-Century Fox turned out a slick, 24-page "publicity-promotion-exploitation" package offering local newspapers everything from Towering Inferno crossword puzzles and coloring contests to tee shirts and the certificate below.

RUN-OF-ENGAGEMENT "INFERNO" CERTIFICATE



To generate word-of-mouth during the run of your engagement, we have designed a simple and effective attention-getter; a "Towering Inferno" Survivor's Certificate which states that your patron has seen the film, survived the holocaust and is hereby pledged to become a fire safety rules follower. Contact your local fire chief and have his publicity department give you their standard list of safety rules which you will give with the "Towering" certificate. Put gold stars on a few of the certificates which would entitle the bearer to win another visit to the "Towering Inferno," a free bucket of popcorn or whatever you can promote from merchants. The certificate can tie you into a crossplugging promotion with a local restaurant chain who would give a prize of a free dinner to holders of gold starred ones. Order MAT SVC-TOW. INF. from National Screen Service.

spotted an advertisement for *The Tower* in a trade publication. Parks made a few calls to publishing world friends and discovered that Stern's book was being offered to Hollywood. Robinson, on hearing the bad news, was ready to abandon *The Glass Inferno*—since he and Scortia had not even begun writing yet. But Scortia, supported by Parks, argued that they should push on. "Of course, we were surprised to learn about Stern's book and we realized ours would have to come out long after his," recalls Scortia. "But we decided to set aside work on the book itself and concentrate on shooting immediately for a movie sale."

The co-authors swiftly set about writing an even more detailed outline of their novel, tailored to appeal to motion picture scouts. The one they produced ran as long as some books—more than 150 manuscript pages. It began:

This outline is detailed scene by scene, each scene being told from the viewpoint of one of the major characters. The fire itself is treated as a major character. The viewpoint of each scene is shown by the character's name in caps for the heading. . . .

Scene 1: FIRE

Somewhere in the Glass House, a man has just closed a door to a room . . . (which) is totally black except for a very small, glowing spark. . . . the tiny, glowing spark marks the birth of the fire. Within an arm's reach of it is an inexhaustible store of food. The fire doesn't know that yet; it's just a spark, nibbling at a tiny cotton thread.

The outline, plus 30 pages of character sketches, was completed by April 1973. Parks distributed 22 photocopies to the movie companies and by April 15 several studios were bidding. At that point, however, Scortia and Robinson still had to write their book. And, as a general rule, advance film sales mean little unless a book succeeds commercially. Film deals have a way of dissolving unless impressive book sales promise box-office success. Thus, supposed six-figure movie deals often produce heady publicity but may bring authors minimal cash returns.

While Scortia and Robinson finally set about writing *The Glass Inferno*, David McKay Co. was preparing to publish Stern's book. When *The Tower* appeared, it sold about 30,000 copies in hard cover but did not make the best-seller list. A condensation was published by The Reader's Digest Book Club and *Good Housekeeping*. Stern's East Coast agent, Carl Brandt of Brandt and Brandt, sold paperback rights for \$235,000 to Warner Paperback Library. Half of that money, plus half of the Reader's Digest Book Club money, goes to McKay. Ten per cent of Stern's profits on the book go to his agents.

Not until Scortia and Robinson submitted their film outline to the studios did Stern learn of their proposed book. His brother, who lives in California, sent him an item from Herb Caen's column in the *San Francisco Chronicle* describing the projected *Inferno* film sale. "By that time, since my book was finished, there was nothing for me to do about it," says Stern, a laconic man who confesses a certain bemusement about the circumstances surrounding the two books' publication.

Stern was well into work on his next book by the time Scortia and Robinson finished *The Glass Inferno* in October 1973, just as *The Tower* was being published. Doubleday had originally planned to publish *Inferno* in February 1974, but delayed its appearance until June partly because of the tardy manuscript and partly to allow Stern's book



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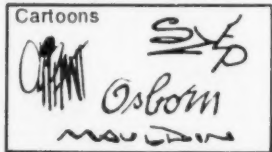
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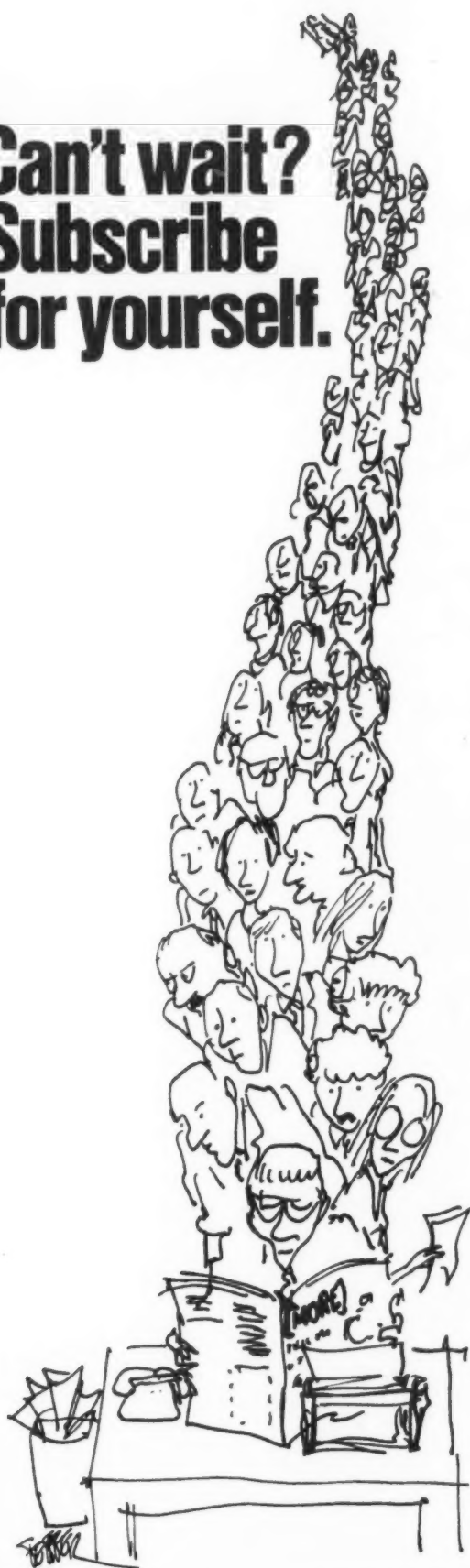
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to run its course.

Inferno received a bigger promotion push from Doubleday than *Tower* had from McKay. Large ads blossomed in the book trade and newspapers, asking: "ARE YOU RISKING YOUR LIFE IN A HIGH-RISE FIRETRAP?" *Inferno* was chosen as a Literary Guild alternate selection and was condensed in *Ladies' Home Journal*. The two-part magazine condensation brought the co-authors \$30,000 each, less Parks's commission. The paperback rights were sold to Pocket Books for a price Scortia places "in the comforting six figures."

By this time, the movie studios were bidding on Stern's novel, too. In particular, Twentieth-Century Fox wanted the property for producer Irwin Allen, the "master of disaster" who turned out *The Poseidon Adventure*, the damp but hugely successful tale of a sinking ocean liner. But while Fox pondered the deal, Stern's film agent, Robin French, sold the rights to Warner Bros. for \$400,000 plus ten per cent of the net profits. Fox executives, left without a skyscraper-disaster book for conversion by Allen into a film, zoomed in on *The Glass Inferno*. Although Fox president Gordon Stulberg felt it chancy to compete with Warner's *Tower*, vice president Jere Henshaw argued that no other studio could compete with Allen's personnel for either speed or efficiency. On April 16, 1973 Fox bought the film rights to *The Glass Inferno* for \$400,000 plus five per cent of the picture's adjusted gross income. The take, after deduction of agent Parks's ten per cent, would be split by co-authors Scortia and Robinson.

It soon became apparent, however, that two concurrent films with almost identical themes were both likely to fail. "We all knew what had happened when two competing films had been produced simultaneously on the life of Jean Harlow—disaster!" one Fox executive said. Fox President Stulberg and Warner Board Chairman Ted Ashley were friends, and Henshaw had formerly worked with Richard Shepherd, Warner's vice president in charge of production. Henshaw arranged a meeting with Shepherd and Frank Wells, then Warner's president and later Ashley's successor as chairman. They agreed in principle that both studios would collaborate on producing a film based on the two books. A short time later, at a meeting also attended by other executives of the two studios, there were more detailed negotiations. Present at the meeting in Fox's quarters were Ashley, Shepherd, John Calley, Warner's vice president in charge of worldwide operations; Stulberg, and Henshaw. At a strategic moment, a door to an adjoining room was dramatically thrown open. The Warner executives were led inside. The walls of the room were covered with story boards, models, sketches and other special-effects materials prepared by Allen and his staff. "That did it," Henshaw told me. "They couldn't believe some of Irwin's stuff had been prepared so quickly, and they realized they had to come aboard with us." The entire pitch took only 20 minutes. It ended with a handshake agreement to proceed with the joint venture.

The task of merging the two novels' plots was assigned to Stirling Silliphant, who had written the screenplay (if that is the word) for *The Poseidon Adventure*. Since the novels were so similar, Silliphant easily wove characters from each into the screenplay. Craig Barton, the young architect of *Inferno*, has a parallel in *Tower*, Nat Wilson, "architect-engineer, middle-sized, solid, rarely excitable." Silliphant blends them into Doug Roberts, deftly preserving the heroic

syllabification. The part, of course, had to be played by Paul Newman.

Besides Newman, the producers assembled a cast that included such "superstars" as Steve McQueen (the fire department's all-purpose hero), Faye Dunaway (Newman's inspiration), William Holden (the grasping builder), Richard Chamberlain (Holden's weak-kneed son-in-law), Fred Astaire (a con man with a heart of gold), Jennifer Jones (Astaire's intended mark) and O. J. Simpson (the skyscraper's security chief and rescuer of pet cats from fires, explosions and floods).

The movie went into production in early 1974 with a "record-breaking" four film crews working simultaneously. Five floors of the "138-story" high-rise were constructed at Fox's Malibu Ranch property, where one film crew shot close-ups. Another crew on location in San Francisco used existing skyscrapers from which the Malibu replica had been modeled. The basement of a huge office building in Century City, Calif., provided a third crew with a vast array of computers, consoles and panels of electronic check systems—intended to heighten the drama of Man vs. Technology Run Wild. The fourth crew worked on what Fox publicists describe as the film's "most impressive set"—a roof garden covering 11,000 square feet of sound stages, all surrounded by a 340-foot cyclorama designed to give the appearance that San Francisco's skyline was just outside.

Producer Allen's insistence on perfection in the technical sequences ran the cost from an initial budget of \$12 million to more than \$14 million. Despite delays, the film was finished in time to give holiday-season moviegoers what they apparently want: disaster melodrama. Fox's distribution schedule was almost identical to the one successfully followed in releasing *Poseidon*. Even the theaters were the same. *Inferno* was given a series of premieres, the glossiest on Dec. 18 at the National Theater in Times Square.

New York Mayor Abe Beame awarded Irwin Allen an honorary fire chief's badge and saw to it that, during a period when he was closing fire stations to save taxes, \$2 million worth of fire equipment was placed outside the theater for the premiere. These seven fire engines—manned by 22 "on-duty" firemen and a deputy fire chief—ringed Times Square.

Originally, a stunt man was to have leaped from the roof of the theater into a net. But this idea was abandoned and instead, Fox put in a call to Flight 485, a hostess agency that provides models for trade shows. Did the agency have a client who was tall enough to resemble a skyscraper, attractive enough to merit a third glance and professional enough to have a fire-red wig among her props? Thus was born Miss Towering Inferno. Her job at the premiere was to stand at the top of an escalator, smile, hand out programs and greet celebrities.

Of the film's superstars, only Faye Dunaway put in an appearance. At a post-premiere party at the Four Seasons, I asked her what she thought of the finished product.

"I'm still dizzy," she said.

"You mean it was all so hectic it confused you."

"Well, there's so much action I really am still dizzy from watching it."

"What did you think of the screenplay?"

"Well, look, as Paul Newman says, it's a picture about a fire."

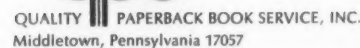
And so it is—honored at the Four Seasons with no less than a *Towering Inferno* of baked Alaska.

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City & State _____ Zip _____

THE BIG APPLE

DAILY NEWS

WILD

WCBS NEWSRAD 88

THE NEW YORKER

7

Extra, Extra!

When reporter Hildy Johnson discovers fugitive murderer Earl Williams in the press room of the municipal building in the current film version of *The Front Page*, he frantically calls Walter Burns, his managing editor at the *Chicago Examiner*, and the following exchange ensues:

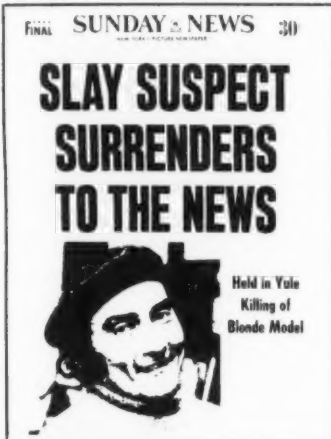
HILDY: Walter, listen and listen good. I'm only gonna say it once. I've got Earl Williams.

WALTER: What's the gag? You got him where?...Honest to God? You sure? Jesus!

HILDY: Now you better [get over here]... I don't know how long I can keep him sewed up.

WALTER (ecstatically envisioning the next day's headline): EXAMINER CAPTURES EARL WILLIAMS! I'll be right over.

Lest such headlines be thought the mere fantasies of imaginary managing editors out of 1920s' Chicago, we reproduce below the front page of the *Daily News*—Dec. 29, 1974.



This Critic Costs Plenty

Everybody complains about the power of the critics, but one unhappy target has decided to fight back. WSNL-TV, a Central Islip, Long Island, UHF television station broadcasting over Channel 67, is suing *Newsday* and its television critic Marvin Kitman for \$15 million. Kitman is charged with portraying the station's executives and employees as "inadequate, incapable, incompetent, ignorant, amateurish, nonprofessional, and in effect, clowns and idiots."

An issue are six columns Kitman wrote following the November 1973 debut of Long Island's first commercial TV station. First Kitman derided Channel 67's claims that its signal could be seen anywhere within 20 miles of its transmitter, suggesting WSNL might best enlarge

its audience by "build[ing] a large screen in Central Islip about six miles high and six miles wide." Later, echoing complaints from many Long Islanders unable to pick up 67, Kitman wrote: "Perhaps natural obstacles, such as Roslyn Heights, block reception in lower-lying communities." In another column, Kitman published the results of a poll he said he had taken among *Newsday* readers concerning their favorite Channel 67 programs and personalities. The 6:30 P.M. news, with 71 votes, was announced as the most popular show. Kitman wrote, however, that the station's "attractively designed test pattern" and its sign-off had each received one vote.

In July 1974, Channel 67's general manager David Polinger—a veteran broadcasting executive and former Voice of America official—complained about Kitman's columns to *Newsday* publisher William Attwood. The complaint was passed along to Lou Schwartz, one of *Newsday*'s three managing editors. Schwartz, who oversees the entertainment pages, wrote Polinger: "Critics being critics, there is little that can be done to soften the punch after Marvin Kitman delivers a jab. Bill Attwood told me of your reaction to Kitman's latest blow and, frankly, I don't believe it was really all that bad. Jarring, yes; below the belt, no."

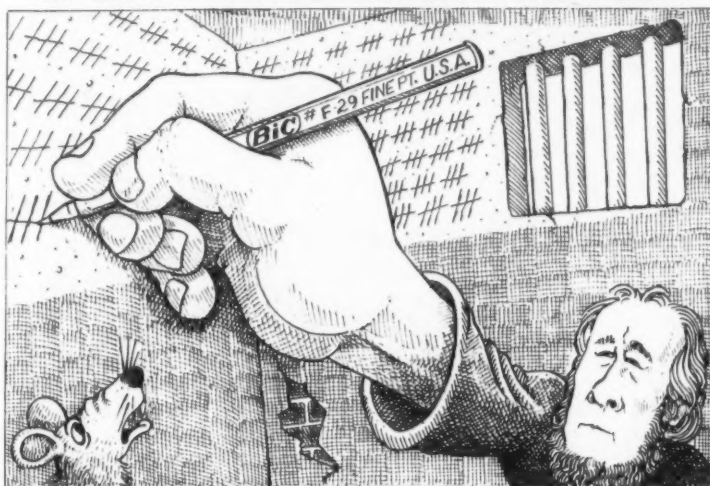
Polinger decided otherwise. After another half year of Kitman Sunday punches, Channel 67 filed suit in State Supreme Court. Among other charges, the suit says Kitman and *Newsday* participated in a "willful and malicious effort to mortally injure" Channel 67 as a "viable advertising medium." It claims that Kitman's viewer poll was "a fictitious and maligning survey." Kitman, however, contends the poll was genuine and says he has readers' letters to prove it.

Kitman denies being more malicious toward Channel 67 than to any other station. "I'm just as



Newsday's Marvin Kitman

It Even Writes Under Borscht



We have received the following press release from Mekler/Ansell Associates Inc., a New York public relations firm:

IF SMITH CAN BE CALLED SMYTH, IS SOLSHENIZYN REALLY SOLZHENITSYN?

When Robert P. Adler, president, Bic Pen Corporation, presented Alexander Solzhenitsyn with a lifetime supply of ballpoint pens, he didn't expect a reply from the exiled Russian author that casts doubt on the spelling of his famous last name.

It seems the envelope carrying a note of thanks from the Nobel prize winner bears the name, "A. Solshenizyn"—not "Solzhenitzyn," which is the way most U.S. publications refer to the noted author. While such newspapers and magazines as the *N.Y. Times*, *Newsweek*, *Time* and *The Wall Street Journal* will vary on the spelling of his first name—Alexander vs. Aleksandr vs. Aleksandre vs. Aleksander—they have steadfastly spelled his last name, "Solzhenitsyn." The return flap of his envelope to Mr. Adler may now cause a major literary flap among the American press.

Mr. Adler had sent the pens to Mr. Solshenizyn (at least that's the name the man himself says he has) after hearing of the author's request in writing three years ago for "a few Bics." In his 48-word reply, written in Russian, Mr. Solshenizyn mentions he uses Bic pens in preparing all manuscripts and prefers only Bic pens with the finest points (probably Bic's F/29 Fine Point Model).

Delighted with the response, Mr. Adler sent off an invitation inviting Mr. Solshenizyn to visit the United States as guest of the Bic Pen Corporation, Milford, Conn.

"I don't care how he spells his name," commented the president of America's No. 1 pen company. "I'm thrilled he uses Bic pens and certainly hope he can find the time to be our guest here," concluded Mr. Adler.

reckless and irresponsible in criticism of Channels 2, 4, 7, 9 and 13," he says. "Oh, have I made a mockery of 13." Kitman said he was planning to retain Perry Mason, Owen Marshall and Judd for the Defense to fight the suit, but he eventually settled for *Newsday*'s attorney Andrew Hughes.

Hughes will argue the traditional right of a critic to fair comment. He will also raise a point of publishing law which says that a product, unlike an individual, cannot be libeled. Kitman, says Hughes, did not criticize individuals at Channel 67, but only the station's "product." Hughes was scheduled to take depositions from Polinger and other station officials beginning Jan. 22. Channel 67 officials declined comment. —MICHAEL DORMAN

Mis-Fortune

Like other regulatory agencies, the Securities and Exchange Commission often comes under fire these days for being too soft. But in a two-part series of articles in the November and December 1974 issues of *Fortune* magazine, Walter Guzzardi Jr., a member of *Fortune*'s board of editors, levels a different sort of criticism at the SEC.

"The narrow experience and legalistic disposition of the commissioners may explain their faith in regulation as the path to salvation and their complementary disbelief in the operation of free forces as an effective agent of change," Guzzardi writes. "The commissioners occasionally pay verbal tribute to the free market, but

NEW YORK

1010 WINS

New York Post

9

Amsterdam News

WNBC-TV 4

VOICE

WNEW-TV 5

VARIETY

13

The New York Times

2

THE BIG APPLE

Sulzberger Has A Better Idea

their actions rarely fit the words. Write a rule, prosecute a case, draw a blueprint, articulate high-sounding goals—these are the Commission's regulatory reflexes, and they give fits to those who come under its jurisdiction."

Nowhere mentioned in the articles is Guzzardi's own experience in the securities field. Between stints at *Fortune*, Guzzardi served as vice president in charge of corporate affairs for Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner and Smith, Inc., the nation's largest brokerage firm and one which has come under investigation by the SEC. Guzzardi says his job there involved "analysis of the atmosphere in Washington."

Guzzardi says he was "very very careful" not to let his experience with Merrill Lynch compromise his objectivity in writing the article. "I do not believe that my previous information [from Merrill Lynch] led the article in either direction," he says. "There is a strong supporting body of opinion for my conclusions."

Robert Lubar, *Fortune's* managing editor, also supported the article, but acknowledged that he should have included a note mentioning Guzzardi's background. "It was a mistake," Lubar said. "In fairness to our readers we should have done that."

—RICHARD WEXLER

X-Rated Ad

Last fall Praeger, a prim house noted for academic books, published a gently prurient history of American pornographic films called *Sinema*. Vala Publishing Co. contracted to market the book by direct mail. Praeger approved the ad copy, and asked that Vala not advertise in publications like *Screw*, so as not to besmirch the Praeger imprint.

Vala's ad begins, "American pornographic films and the people who make them." It includes the book's table of contents ("Erect Men and Fallen Women" . . .) and a fuzzy dust jacket picture showing porn queen Georgina Spelvin making eyes at a snake in a climactic scene from *The Devil in Miss Jones*.

Esquire and *True*, which prohibit ads for sex books, rejected the ad, as did the *National Enquirer*, *Rocky Mountain News*, *N.Y. Post* and *McCall's*. The *N.Y. Daily News* and *Photoplay* accepted it without change. The *N.Y. Times* book review ran the ad Jan 12—minus the table of contents and Georgina's snake. With few exceptions, the media may legally accept or reject ads as they wish.

—DAVID M. RUBIN

Ford Motor Co. chairman Henry Ford II and president Lee Iacocca came to New York Dec. 9 to speak before the Newspaper Advertising Bureau. In the process, the auto industry's campaign for relaxing federal environmental and safety standards in car manufacturing received a hefty shot of publicity. Close to 80 men (and one woman) from executive and top editorial ranks, another 30 or so writing editors (financial or editorial) and a handful of business reporters attended. Every major northeastern newspaper market was represented, plus half a dozen small communities. All had come at the request of



Henry Ford II

Wide World

Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, chairman of the NAB and president and publisher of *The New York Times*.

As NAB chairman, Sulzberger had good reason to call the meeting. The NAB is an organization of publishers who meet to discuss common advertising problems. Last fall, at the annual meeting in Detroit of NAB directors and auto executives, Henry Ford had complained to Sulzberger that automakers were having difficulty getting their message across to the American people. Their concern was that federal safety and pollution standards are putting unreasonable restraints on the industry and unnecessarily driving up prices. Since Ford is the nation's third largest newspaper advertiser, with a budget in 1973 of about \$19 million, the company's problems are naturally of keen interest to the NAB. "I said it certainly would affect the advertising coming into our newspapers," Sulzberger recalls. "I said I would set up a forum if they [Ford officials] were interested."

Sulzberger invited his publishing colleagues in a letter dated Nov. 20, and went on to say:

And, as a publisher, I would strongly urge you to bring with you your editorial page editor and your business and financial news editor, for the story that Messrs. Ford and

Iacocca wish to tell goes far beyond the scope of an 'automotive' story.

The invitation was sent on the letterhead of *The New York Times*.

The *Times's* editors learned about the upcoming event, says Sulzberger, when "I called them." Sulzberger says the appropriateness of his urging hard news coverage of a major advertiser "never crossed my mind" until a *Times* editor complained to him about covering the meeting. "We went and had a drink together and agreed to disagree," says Sulzberger.

In the Americana Hotel's Imperial Ballroom, Henry Ford unexpectedly took the podium first to make his



Arthur Ochs Sulzberger

Wide World

annual year-end economic statement and forecast. Launching into a rapid-fire critique of federal economic policies, Ford laid out his own proposals, including a tax cut, for ending the recession. Then, in a gloomy forecast for the auto industry in 1975, he added that if federal standards aren't eased, new cars will be priced out of most Americans' budgets. Ford closed his remarks with a plea for newspapers to "spread the word" about the importance of economic policy revisions—and, presumably, environmental and safety standard revisions.

Iacocca moved to the podium next for what his own PR men call "the S-D-E [safety, damageability, emissions] pitch"—an elaborate 45-minute treatise on the evils of excessive government regulation of the auto industry. He bombarded the audience with chart after chart flashed on a suspended screen, each chart designed to show statistically how expensive safety and pollution controls really are. He exhibited a 1978 "federal Pinto" (cost \$5,000, weight 3,000 lbs., 18-19 miles per gallon) and a 1978 Ford Pinto (\$4,200 2,500 lbs., 24-25 miles per gallon). He questioned the alleged ill health effects of auto emission and the benefits to be derived from air

The meeting was widely covered. Both AP and UPI carried stories on their financial and A-wires. UPI also carried a 350-word sidebar on Iacocca's speech. The Dow Jones and Reuters wires carried brief stories on Ford's comments, as did the Washington Post-Los Angeles Times, Knight and Newhouse wires. A survey by Darrell Leo, associate editor of *Editor and Publisher*, showed that in most cases where newspapers had sent reporters or writing editors to the meeting, the story was played either on page one or as the business page lead. Leo found that, by far, the *Times* gave the story the most space. A 1,000-word story by *Times* transportation writer Robert Lindsey ran at the top of page one with a two column picture of Ford. Lindsey says he covered the meeting "like any news story" and that he did not know Sulzberger organized the gathering—although Sulzberger had announced the fact from the podium.

Several stories gave strong play to Iacocca's anti-regulation arguments, but most reporters concentrated on Ford's tax proposals. The exception was Philadelphia *Bulletin* business writer Peter Binzen, who told precisely how the meeting had come about. "The Henry-and-Lee show, was near-perfect public relations," Binzen wrote. Binzen challenged Iacocca's figures, and declared that "he didn't convince this listener that automakers are doing enough to reduce highway carnage by making cars safer."

Ford Motor Co. publicity men note that Ford's year-end statement always receives prominent display in the press. "Maybe *The New York Times* play was different than it had been before," says PR man Jerry Sloan, "but nothing else was unusual."

However, writers who cover the auto industry disagree. They claim Ford received just the sort of extra publicity it was seeking. "They didn't say anything new about safety standards," says Tom Kleeme, auto writer for the *Detroit Free Press*. "All they did was package it differently."

Sulzberger, meanwhile, says the Ford meeting was so successful that the NAB may invite major advertisers in to speak as a standard practice. "In fact," he says, "at our next board meeting we'll discuss if, on a selective basis, we'll continue doing it."

—JANE SHOEMAKER

DAILY NEWS

WHD

WCBS NEWSRAD

NEW YORKER

7

New York

11

1010 WINS

New York Post

9

New York News

WNBC-TV 4

VOICE

WNEW-TV 5

VARIETY

13

The New York Times

02

[MORE] 23

FURTHER MORE

(continued from page 27)

infatuation quickly cooled to disenchantment, if not worse, and Lippmann always remained his own man.

He often warned his colleagues of the dangers of cronyism, which he described as "the curse of journalism," and said at the height of his quarrel with Lyndon Johnson over Vietnam: "After many years I have reached the firm conclusion that it is impossible for an objective newspaperman to be a friend of a President."

It was a lesson he learned long before Vietnam. In 1936, when he was still on fairly good terms with Franklin Roosevelt, he explained the "invariably delicate and difficult" relations between politicians and newspapermen, in which the latter "soon find themselves compelled to choose

between friendship and the ties of loyalty that come from companionship on the one hand, the stern embarrassing truth on the other." This, he wrote, was the most unpleasant side of newspaper work, and he learned that it was unavoidable.

His method was to keep his emotional distance. This was not always easy for him. He had his enthusiasms, like any other editorialist. But his great advantage was that he was never awed by the rich, the uniformed or the mighty. Wealth did not strike him as being equated with political wisdom, although his social circle was one of the privileged. While there were military men he admired, it was for their modesty and intelligence, not for the glitter of their brass. And since he had known every President and virtually every major Cabinet official from the time of Woodrow Wilson on down, he did not get misty-eyed when they played "Hail to the Chief" nor puffed up when the Secretary of State called him on the phone.

He took pride in being a journalist and, unlike many who had achieved his eminence, showed a lively interest in the careers of his younger colleagues. While he extolled the freedom of the press, he inveighed against journalistic invasions of privacy and defended the publication of the Pentagon Papers only on the ground that in this particular case the public's right to know exceeded the government's desire to keep secrets.

There were times when he tired of what, as

even a very young man, he called "the nausea of ideas." At those moments he flirted with the thought of retiring to one of the ivied campuses that were continually offering him endowed chairs. There, as in Maine, he would have had the tranquility to muse on philosophy and write more books.

But he knew it would not work. With all his shyness, his veneer of detachment, his penchant for theorizing, he was too involved with the "living world." He would not let it go. Even after he stopped writing the "Today and Tomorrow" column in 1967 after 36 continuous years, he continued, as long as his health held out, as a contributor to *Newsweek*.

He often wrote about what it meant to be a journalist, but nowhere more succinctly than in a little-known tribute to C.P. Scott, the legendary editor of the *Manchester Guardian*. "The hallmark of responsible comment," he wrote a decade ago, "is not to sit in judgment on events as an idle spectator but to enter imaginatively into the role of a participant in the action. Responsibility consists in sharing the burden of men directing what is being done, or the burden of being an opponent of what is being done, or the burden of offering some other course of action in the mood of one who has realized what it would mean to undertake it."

It was a burden he never shirked. ■

A Challenge to Students...

Can you top "The Great Albany Sex Scandal"?

"The Great Albany Sex Scandal" by Richard Wexler appeared in the July 1974 issue of [MORE]. A detailed, careful scrutiny of four state legislators, a young nurse and journalistic overkill in New York's capital city, the story won [MORE]'s first competition for students in media criticism.

We're renewing the challenge to students this year to encourage more examination of the press and its treatment of local news. The contest ground rules are outlined below.

All college and university students, either individually or in groups, are invited to enter the competition. The best article, selected by [MORE]'s editors, will appear in [MORE]. The author(s) will receive our regular story fee and the **Student Award for Media Criticism**, to be presented at the 4th A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention next May in New York.

The Subject:

1. To show how the media in your area are ignoring or inadequately reporting a *local* story of major significance.
2. To report that story with the thoroughness and toughmindedness that the media ought to be applying.
3. To draw the broad implications from the specific story.
4. The subject is up to you, but could be politics, business, sports, religion, institutionalized charity, publishing, communications, government, etc.

The Story:

1. A careful, analytical scrutiny of the media's performance.
2. A well-documented exposé of the story itself.
3. No maximum or minimum length, but shoot for 4,000 to 6,000 words.
4. Strive for detailed reporting and crisp, tight writing.

Deadline: April 15, 1975 (no exceptions). Please mail entries to [MORE], 750 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

Eligibility: All full-time college and university students may enter the competition, either singly or in groups.

[MORE]

Student Award For Media Criticism

CLASSIFIEDS

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A GOOD WOMAN IS HARD TO FIND. Seek writing position New England. M.A. Journalism, news writing experience. Expertise woman's issues. J. Oleck; 1 Chauncy; Cambridge, Mass. (42)

COPY EDITOR/recent N.Y.U. grad with 6 months experience on large NYC daily. Wants to leave Big Apple. David Levine, 64 Baker Hill Road, Great Neck, N.Y. 11023 (42)

FUTURE PULITZER WINNER, 27, needs a job. Anywhere. One year experience on big city business beat. Good clips. J-degree. Joel Kendler, 4298 Wilkie #K, Palo Alto, Ca. 94306 (42)

REPORTER/REVIEWER/REWRITE 10 years' experience newspapers and TV. Skilled writer on politics, film, music, media. Bob Wiener, 14 W. 85, NYC 10024. (42)

INFORMATION SPECIALIST, administrative and research experience, speaks Spanish, Italian, Greek, French, seeks interesting job in related fields. Chris Kanas, 1904 Spruce St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103 (42)

JOBS WANTED

SIMPLE/Student interested in magazine publishing, layout and editing for your publication. Summer employment. Experienced, resume available. Journalism major attending West Virginia University. Reply Box 44. (42)

HARVARD LAW GRAD, '75, authored 1 book (Doubleday), published 4 more (Dutton), extensive journalism background, looking for interesting media work, any field. Reply Box 45. (42)

VANCOUVER BASED FREELANCE covers American-Canadian west coast. Specializes business, finance, trade magazines. 400 published articles. Rates/details on request. Andrews, Box 3026, Vancouver 3, Canada (42)

FREELANCE TRAVEL WRITER-PHOTOGRAPHER, extensively published, traveling to Egypt January-February, will do stories on any facet. Louise Zobel, 877 Northampton Drive, Palo Alto, Ca. 94303, 415-322-0063. (42)

MUSIC/ART REVIEWER, FEATURE WRITER, former editor of newspaper arts supplement, seeks newspaper, magazine, PR work; samples sent. D.R. Martin, 505 15th Ave. S.E., Apt 1, Minneapolis, MN 55414. (42)

WRITER/REVIEWER, articulate, informed, experienced specialist in film and media subjects seeks assignments for print or broadcast. Own contacts. Handles camera well. 212/874-7330 anytime—service p/u. (42)

JOURNALIST/WRITER with 3 years consumer, 2 years trade experience wants challenging urban newspaper position. Can handle music, features, business, news. Donlon, Apt. B, 47 West 85th St., N.Y.C. 10024 (42)

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER, political, social, 6 years experience, 2 books, seeking position or freelance assignments, c/o Review, 4309 Beaconfield-5, Montreal, Canada (42)

EXPERIENCED WRITER-REPORTER seeks Summer job. Editing, broadcasting experience. Good typing, spelling. Have published freelance. College junior. Andrea Monk, ASC, Alamosa, CO 81101, Girault Hall. (42)

BETWEEN—BOOKS AUTHOR of well-reviewed (NYT, etc.) profile of DAR, published 1974, seeks writing, research or editing assignments. P. Anderson, 1642 Lombard St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19146 (42)

RESPONSIBLE EXPERIENCED AND CAPABLE student seeks Summer internship or job in print journalism. References available. Joshua Stein, Box 101, Davis, Ca 95616. (42)

YOUNG, WIDELY-EXPERIENCED British writer and broadcaster seeks freelance assignments in N.Y.C. Bill Taylor, 23 W. 73rd St., #602A, N.Y.C. 10023. (212) 787-5500, #379. (42)

REPORTER, 24, laid off from TV station, desires radio news spot. Two years newspaper experience. John Borden, 407 W. Franklin Ave., Collingwood, N.J. 08107. 609-858-0218. (42)

JOBS WANTED

MADARIN CHINESE three years, fluent German and French, experienced reporter/feature writer wants bigger, better paper. Dennis N. Phillips, 2828 Anderson St. Ext., Bristol, Tenn. 37620. (42)

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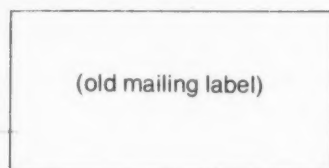
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For journalists, the West Coast media conference means an opportunity for self-scrutiny. For the press critics, an occasion to speak out loud. And for the public, it's a chance to hear a few things they may never see in print.

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[MORE]'s A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention has provoked a lot of comment in past years. *Time* called the first one "journalism's Woodstock." "Joe [Liebling] would have loved it," said *Saturday Review*. Last year, the *Washington Post* labelled it, among other things, "reflective and stimulating."

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A word about registration: please don't expect confirmation by mail if you register in advance. Simply pick up your credentials at the door. The deadline for advance registration is February 10th — so if you haven't mailed the coupon by then, you can sign up in person upon arrival. Registration begins February 21st at 6:00 P.M., and continues throughout the weekend.

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Walter Lippmann

BY RONALD STEEL

Walter Lippmann, who died in December at the age of 85, was ceremoniously hailed in a hundred obituaries as the nation's foremost—indeed its only—"public philosopher." That he was, and it was a title that always pleased him. But before, and even beyond, that august estate, he was a working journalist who started turning out copy for his prep school magazine at the turn of the century and never stopped setting down his thoughts until near the very end.

In his role as philosopher he grappled with the big problems: spiritual unrest, the decline of morals, the decay of democracy. But his greatest fame, and the reason he was so admired in his profession and by his readers, lay in his ability to put the problems of the day into focus. Because he had a mind trained in philosophy and the classics, a marvelously lucid style and a genius for simplifying the complex, he was able to transform the disconnected facts into a coherent pattern.

This is what made him unique. However history may judge him as a philosopher, he was one of the greatest journalists of his age. He was not always right, although on balance he probably made fewer bloopers than most columnists. Nor did he provide any startling revelations. Insisting that he was not a reporter, he shied away from a scoop, even when handed to him on a platter, as though it were distasteful and slightly odoriferous.

The pampered son of wealthy parents, Lippmann could have been virtually anything he wanted. William James wanted him to be a philosopher, Bernard Berenson an art critic, Arthur Garfield Hayes a lawyer, Graham Wallas a gentleman socialist. His classmate John Reed ceremoniously announced that he would surely be President of the United States. It would have been so easy to have become a scholar or a dilettante, to have retreated to an academic cloister or to a hilltop near Fiesole. But that was never a temptation for Lippmann—which may be surprising to those who have come to think of him as an Olympian. He valued his cork-lined room for the hours of writing, but he needed involvement with people. When the redoubtable Mabel Dodge, who roped him briefly into her radical chic New York salon in the happy days just before World War I, asked him what he cared about, he replied without hesitation, "The living world."

He spent his entire life seeking to embrace it. Only three weeks before he was to receive his master's degree in philosophy, he suddenly left Harvard because he had been offered a job on a fledgling Boston weekly of vaguely socialist persuasion. The paper soon expired (though Lippmann eventually married the editor's daughter), but he had catapulted himself into the world.

When Lincoln Steffens came to Cambridge

Ronald Steel, the author of *Pax Americana and Imperialists and Other Heroes*, is writing a biography of Walter Lippmann to be published by Atlantic/Little, Brown.

looking for an assistant, Lippmann was there, eager and ready, the obvious choice. He served as alter ego and errand boy to the great muckraker, became an editor on *Everybody's*, left in boredom to work for the socialist mayor of Schenectady, soon fled in disillusion, turned to free-lance journalism while he got his bearings, wrote a couple of books which seem today almost as freshly iconoclastic as they did then and, at the age of 25, became a founding editor of *The New Republic*.

There he wrote gracefully on the arts, caustically on politics, always with a style that brilliantly illuminated whatever angered him, whether it was an abysmal performance of Ibsen, the radium poisoning of watch workers or the submarine warfare of the Kaiser's navy. To read these pieces of the young Lippmann, collected a few years ago in *Early Writings*, is a revelation akin to seeing photos of one's own father as an adolescent. There is charm and grace and indignation and, above all, passion—the kind of passion that went out of Lippmann's life during his cantankerous fight with the New Deal and his boredom with the decade of Eisenhower. It was a



Walter Lippmann in 1925

passion that returned only near the very end of his life in his outrage over the Vietnam war.

The world was young when the century was in its teens, and Lippmann shared its idealism. He believed that the war against the Kaiser could help make the world safe for democracy. To help bring it about he worked as Colonel House's right-hand man, wrote eight of the Fourteen Points for Wilson and penned propaganda leaflets that were dropped behind the German lines. But when Wilson came back from Versailles with a harsh treaty, his idealism—like that of his friends in the Progressive movement—turned to disillusion and a sense of betrayal. From that disillusionment came *Public Opinion*, the classic work that demolished the democrat's conventional assumption that the public is capable of making intelligent choices on critical social issues. It was followed by the even more damning but less well known *Phantom Public*.

While the war destroyed Lippmann's idealism, his experience as a propagandist made him aware of how public opinion could be manipulated. He became distrustful both of government officials and of the voters, who were asked to decide on issues whose true meaning was distorted by those with a vested interest in the outcome. Yet he never became a cynic, and when

"The individual writer," wrote Lippmann, "... cannot cover the universe, and if he begins to (try), he will soon be saying less and less about more and more until at last he is saying nothing about everything."

he moved over to the *New York World*, where he remained for a decade as editorial page director until the paper's demise in 1931, his unsigned editorials were a continuous effort to educate his readers.

What he liked about the *World* was the anonymity that gave the editorial writer a freedom that the signed columnist could never have. "One of the best tests of a man's interest in his work, as distinguished from his interest in his ego, was the readiness to do fine things anonymously," he wrote Mabel Dodge years before he joined the *World*. It was a feeling he never lost. Sometimes in his later life, when he would grow discouraged with the tyranny of the syndicated column, of the need to have an opinion on every crucial and trivial subject, and of the personal responsibility for one's every utterance, he would look back with nostalgia to his days as the anonymous voice of the *World*.

He thought a good deal about his role as a columnist, and about the responsibility of journalists in a society where the press was a powerful molder of public opinion. Just as he prodded his colleagues to have the courage of their assumptions, so he warned them against their pretensions. "The individual writer is not a public personage, or at least ought not to be," he wrote in explanation of why he was not taking sides in the 1940 election. "Nor is he a public institution, nor is he the repository of 'influence' and 'leadership'; he is a reporter and commentator who lays before his readers his findings on the subjects he has studied, and leaves it at that. He cannot cover the universe, and if he begins to imagine that he is called to such a universal mission, he will soon ... be saying less and less about more and more until at last he is saying nothing about everything."

Lippmann understood that danger, which is why he took several months off from his column every year, usually to go up to Maine to write a book. He sometimes spoke of the column as the laboratory in which he tested out ideas he would later elaborate. But after the appearance of *The Good Society* in 1937, he published only one major book, his ruminations on *The Public Philosophy* on which he had been working off and on for nearly two decades. For the last 30 years of his career he was primarily a columnist, not a writer of books, and that is where his influence was most strongly felt.

Both by nature and by position he could not be bought off by politicians in the currency they use—flattery, privileged access, leaks, special favors. He was so disillusioned by two heroes of his young manhood, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, that he never again gave his heart to any politician. There were, to be sure, flirtations, particularly in the early days of the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations. But

(continued on page 24)

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